

# The art of illusion

By Charlotte Artyshko

As you walked into the Aud Theatre, on May 16, you were engulfed in the sound of children laughing and the excitement and anticipation for the show to begin. The Virden and Area Community Daycare presented AbracaDAZZLE as part of their fundraising efforts for their new daycare facility.

Children of all ages came to enjoy a brilliant and entertaining show performed by John Kaplan. He performed illusions

like "Twister" in which his assistant was put in a box that would have her head spin as her body stood still; and putting another assistant in a box with holes, moving the box out of place and then sticking cylinders in the holes. Kaplan performed a card trick and then let the audience in on his secret. This magic set of cards was available for the public to purchase along with several other memorabilia.

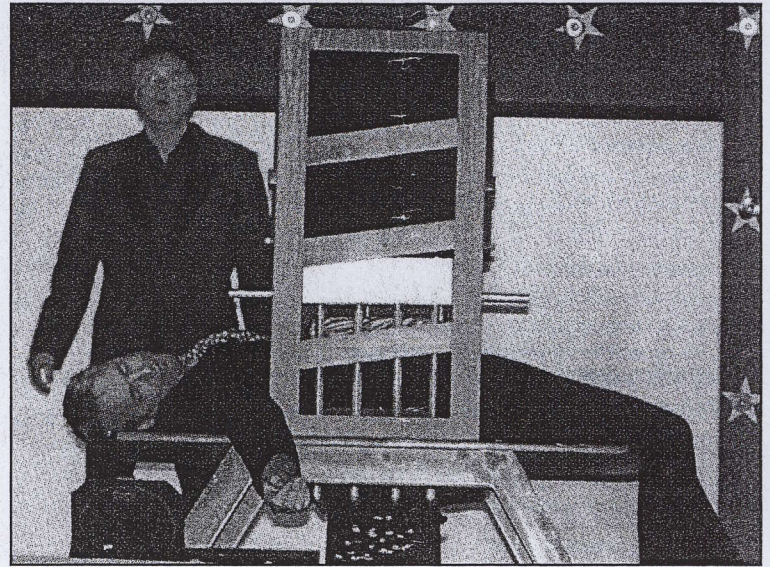
Kaplan had participants from the audience volunteer in some of his

illusions. To demonstrate levitation, 8-year-old Emma Rhodes laid on a surfboard that was hovering about 3 feet from the ground when Kaplan's assistants removed the chairs that supported it.

Throughout the first half of the show you could purchase 50/50 tickets. Six winners each received a key that might open a chest filled with treasure. At intermission the keys were picked and the winner of the treasure was Paityn Ireland. A crowd favourite was Kaplan's demonstration of the "Art of Illusion". He drew a face on a white board which came to life and they started singing "I can do anything better than you."

The most exciting event of the evening was when Mayor Jeff McConnell was to be sawed in half. When the time came, McConnell was given three options, acupuncture, to be sawed in half or the guillotine. When asked what he wanted, McConnell replied "levitation." In the end, his options were put in numbered envelopes, he chose number three and it turned out to be acupuncture (with spikes, not needles).

As they started strap-



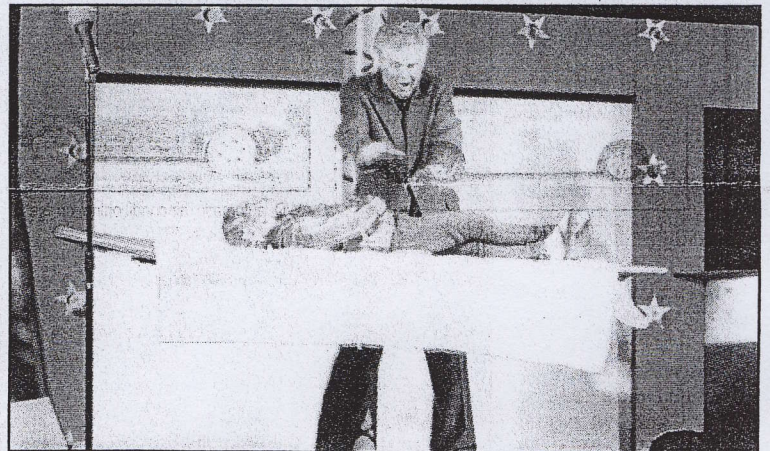
John Kaplan performing acupuncture on Mayor Jeff McConnell at AbracaDAZZLE on Monday, May 16. Photo/Charlotte Artyshko

Kaplan called an assistant from the audience to the stage to make sure it was done right. Tyler Wiltsey had to go under the acupuncture table and report what was happening. "I see bubblegum," said Wiltsey.

When asked how he felt and what the experience was like. McCon-

nell replied "I thought it was all very quick; didn't the assistant pull the top off me right after he slid the steel rods down? The main thing I remember is craving bubblegum after the illusion was over." For the grande finale John payed tribute to Harry Houdini with Houdini's illusion Metamorphosis

by locking one of his assistants in a wooden box and then changing places with her. When Kaplan counted to three, his assistant appeared and he was locked in the box. This was a very entertaining show with great music wherein the audience had a chance to rediscover their sense of wonder.



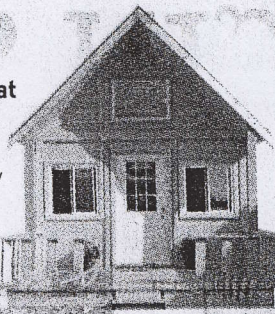
Eight-year-old Emma Rhodes being levitated by Kaplan. Photo/Charlotte Artyshko

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