

In August, we had our first Top Magician of the year contest. MC, Nick Paul put the whole thing together including a PowerPoint presentation laying out the whole contest. Ten people entered the competition and this was a unique competition in that the entrants had no idea what was expected of them. They found out as the contest evolved. The ten participants were Kevin Rhodehouse, Al Garber, Zack Mandel, Josh Kurzban, Bob Lusthaus, Dave Levitan, Mike Goldman, Jeff Miller, Ziggy and Wayne Haarhaus.

Challenge number one was impromptu magic using whatever you had on you at the time. Jeff floated a business card; Wayne did the pencil behind the ear bit; Ziggy did the kinetic watch; Dave, a little mentalism; Al floated a pencil. Kevin did a three fly routine; Josh vanished his fingers one at a time; Mike did a bill penetration and the grey elephant in Denmark and Zach did a bill switch and vanished his eyeglasses. I forgot to write down what Bob did. Anyway, Ziggy was judged to be the winner and Josh was eliminated.

The second challenge was a four phase ambitious card routine. Mike Goldman won that round and Jeff Miller was eliminated.

The third challenge was a trivia contest. The contestants were told the given name of famous magicians and they had to respond with the correct stage name of the performer. Again, Mike Goldman won and Bob Lusthaus was eliminated.

The fourth challenge was a team event. The magicians were given a number of objects that were indigenous to various locations, i.e. the beach, the office, a bar. You get the idea. Ziggy, Dave and Al chose the beach. Handfuls of sand vanished from one performer's hand and re-appeared in another performer's hand. They then teamed to jointly present a sea shell matrix routine. Zach, Wayne, Kevin and Mike chose the office. Mike did a cap in beer bottle penetration. I think I'd like to work in that office. He also performed a multi-phase rubber band routine. Kevin did the old linking paper clips bit using a dollar. Zach did some flip stick stuff using a pencil and Wayne did a pen through a post-it covered bill. The beach team won and in a double elimination, Zach and Mike were eliminated.

The fifth challenge was the classics. There was a Svengali Deck, Prof. Nightmare, sponge balls, Scotch & Soda and an Invisible Deck. Participants were challenged to perform with one of the

items, but they were not allowed to do the routine that comes in the instructions when one buys the trick and they also had to use two types of misdirection in their presentation. Wayne won that one and Kevin was eliminated.

The sixth challenge was more trivia. Starting with the letter 'E', people had to name a magician whose first or last name began with that letter and then proceed through the alphabet and keep naming magicians. For example, 'E'rdnase; 'F'rank Garcia etc.

That challenge eliminated Dave, so the remaining performers competed in a skills competition such as one-handed cuts, coin rolls and a six inch high muscle pass. That resulted in Ziggy being crowned Ring 244's Top Magician, a title he gets to claim for the next 366 days. Congratulations Ziggy!

We had an entertainment change for our January 28, 2012 dinner and show. Jay Mattioli will be taking over the show and I know that it will be a good one. Now, off to the diner.

Bill Krupskas