

It's August and it's hot! The subject of our Meeting this month is Top Magician of the Year. Nine magicians entered the contest to compete for the title. They were, in no particular order, Josh Kurzban, Mike Maione, Zach Mandel, Jeff Miller, Kevin Rhodehouse, Chris Ward, Ziggy, David Glassman and Nicole Homberger. The first category was "Out of Your Pockets – No Cards". All of the performers did some really nice stuff but, unfortunately, it was Jeff Miller who was eliminated.

The remaining eight were divided into four teams and provided with items indigenous to the office, the beach, a coffee house and a restaurant and then they were given a few minutes to come up with 2-3 minutes of magic. Kevin and Chris performed a torn and restored straw wrapper, a paddle routine using the straw and a torn and restored sugar packet with sugar ending up back in the packet. Ziggy and Mike did Crazy Man's Handcuffs, the vanishing pencil in the ear bit and the old psychic crayon trick. Zach and David performed bottle caps across, vanished a champagne flute and some spoon bending. Josh and Nicole did a matrix routine using sea shells, multiplying sea shells and a sand production from those same shells. This time Zach and Dave were eliminated and Zach's dad, Harry was one of the judges! Go figure.

In the next challenge, host Nick Paul gave the book title and the contestant had to give the author. This event eliminated Nicole and Josh – those who grew up in the DVD generation. If only he asked who wrote Tarbell Number 4.

Next was Classics. On the table were linking rings, a Zombie and rope. Ziggy demonstrated a very nice six-ring routine. Chris did a knot routine and Professor's Nightmare. Kevin performed Daryl's Rope Routine and Mike did a silk through rope penetration and a cut and restored rope including Professor's Nightmare routine. After this segment, we lost Chris.

Next was a skills challenge. Contestants had to choose from a list of magician's skills such as seven consecutive perfect Faro Shuffles, sleeving, coin rolls, muscle passes, boomerang and catch a card. You get the idea. This time we lost last year's winner, Ziggy

The final challenge was Anything Goes. Mike did a wonderful memorized deck routine. In fact it was extremely similar to the routine Max Maven used to close the first half of the show that he recently performed here in NYC. Kevin produced a deck of cards from a picture in a catalog and then performed a very commercial sponge ball routine. And after all that the judges still could not decide the winner. So both magicians attempted the Cups and Balls and Kevin Rhodehouse was awarded the title of Top Magician of 2012. Congratulations! Although, judging on the various challenges posed to the magicians, I would have called it the Most Versatile Magician Contest, but, then again, that's just me. Well, until September....

Bill Krupskas