

We needed to hold our June meeting on the first Tuesday instead of the first Wednesday due to a scheduling conflict. It was also the eve of a religious holiday which also held down attendance. But we all had a good time!

Things started off early as Jose Merced and Steve Goldstein went before the membership committee and both applicants were passed to perform for the entire membership at a future meeting.

The subject for the meeting was Team Challenge. There were three teams. The first team, aptly named Team # 1, consisted of Gary Levenson, Steve Goldstein, Jose Merced and Mike Goldman. Team # 2 was made up of Magic Al Garber, Bill Krupskas, Zach Mandel and Zach's girlfriend Alana. After all, every magician needs a pretty assistant! The final team, Team # 3, was comprised of Kevin Rhodehouse, Sal Mannuzza and Bob Lusthaus. Chris Ward, Bruce Schneider and Dick Mancini were the judges.

Each team was given a small brown paper bag containing 2 rubber bands, 2 cotton balls, 2 sugar packets, 2 tissues, 2 playing cards, one 18 inch piece of string (it was really some black thread), one straw, one Styrofoam cup and last but not least, one small car.

The teams were given about 15-20 minutes to come up with an act lasting at least 10 minutes that used all the props and all the team members in the act. The teams were also required to smoothly transition between effects. For example, if a magician produced a cotton ball as a final load in a one cup routine, then the next performer could take that cotton ball and do a one coin type routine.

Well, let me tell you, it was a lot of fun! Everyone threw themselves into the challenge and we saw some really innovative routines and uses for the props. For example, a member of Team # 2 noticed that the tissues were 2 ply so instead of two tissues, there were now four, so the sucker torn and restored napkin routine that uses three napkins became a viable option. I know that you're thinking why didn't we just rip the tissues in half? Well, if they were ripped, they would not look identical and a spectator seeing a ripped edge might wonder where the other half was. If you're going to do a trick, then do it right!

When it was all over, Team # 2 was declared the winner and each member was awarded a Xerox copy of a certificate of achievement that was signed by each of the judges! It's been five days since the meeting, and I still have mine!

Ring 244 does not go dormant in the summer and we were lucky enough to land Raphael Benatar to lecture in July. A lot of good card stuff coming up! Hope everyone is enjoying the summer because many of us had a nasty winter. I wonder if all the ice in Lake Superior has melted yet?

Bill Krupskas