

No. 58, KNOXVILLE, TN – Smoky Mountain Mystics
Meets 4th Thursday at 7:15 PM each month
Knoxville First Seventh Day Adventist Church Annex
3625 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, Tennessee

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With the anticipation of the Winter Carnival of Magic just a week away, we had an excellent turn-out for the February meeting: 21 members and three guests. After some discussions and business pertaining to the final details of the WCM, members helped to put the pens, pad folios, and swag bags together so they would be ready for registration.

The magic of the evening started with one of our guests doing his initiation performance. Derek Granfield changed a \$2 bill into two \$1 bills and back, a fun Invisible Deck routine, and finished with another illusion. The Ring members him unanimously.

The theme for the rest of the meeting was all about “Convention Stories” or tricks from a convention. Mike Stratman – who has been a pillar of the Winter Carnival for almost 20 years as the talent and facilities chairman – is also an active member of the I.B.M.’s Convention Committee for many years. He was quick to tell the story about the time the convention was in San Diego and Tony Shelly’s wife was missing and had been “detained” over in Tijuana! Ben Young told about his first Winter Carnival (2007) when he was in 8th grade. He remembered entering the Close-up Contest and was embarrassed about the routine he did back then. Ben then performed a card effect that he learned one year at the Troy Hooser lecture.

Caleb Bailey reminisced about a smattering of funny stories (the blind guy in the competition that was not blind, the Pendragons’ “cat” that was actually a house cat and not a tiger as Caleb had envisioned, and when Boris Wild fooled everyone because he was using his own marked deck!). Pan Walker talked about joining the Ring 7 years ago and how he was attempting to memorize the deck back then. He told the story about working with Shoot Ogawa and Boris Wild on memorized effects – but Pan’s was actually just memorized.

Jeff King talked about last year’s Winter Carnival and how he got back to the hotel in a mysterious manner. Then he did Patrick Page’s Poker Changing Cards. Ed Ripley brought ought HUGE Cups and Balls and did a fun routine with these floor-sized cup. Tom Vorjohan shared a few stories about being the new talent chairman for the WCM, and also told stories about his first convention in Dallas for the ’86 TAOM. Ed Denny gave us an awesome history lesson about the first few years of the Winter Carnival and how it started at a Ramada in Gatlinburg.

Michael Messing has been working backstage at the WCM since he was 15, and he could have told stories all night. One of our favorite was how he helped Rocco and his fiancé

spend their time horseback riding and on the flume waiting for a late Sunday departing flight. Bill Sturgis shared the infamous “Phillip” story, and then Ed Ripley was requested to tell his incredibly funny “Maria” story from when we were back in Gatlinburg. It was an extremely fun night sharing memories, laughs and stories.

Tom Vorjohan