

No. 58, KNOXVILLE, TN – Smoky Mountain Mystics
Meets 4th Thursday at 6:45 PM each month
Messiah Lutheran Church
6900 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, Tennessee 37919

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To conclude 2018, we had an excellent holiday party on the second Thursday of December. We met at our normal church in the fellowship hall for a catered dinner spread by Salsarita's. Nothing says "Ho-ho-ho!" quite like watching 38 magicians, friends, and guests make their own tacos and nachos!

Just a week prior to the party, we were saddened to learn about the declining health of Cincinnati's Dean of Magicians, Bill Pryor, who was to be our guest of honor performing for us. Luckily, we have some great friends around here, and we pulled together a most awesome show. Stephen Knowles opened with his hysterical ventriloquism with his horse, Red. It never ceases to amaze as Stephen can blow bubbles while that horse talks! Stephen introduced his seven-year-old son, Samuel, who had a great set of jokes for us that he did with his chicken puppet. Then to conclude his part, Stephen announced that we were about to see his farewell performance of the Julio and Willy act that has taken Stephen around the globe. His human dummies were Jason Murphy and Tim Pressley.

Tom Vorjohan acted as our emcee and he welcomed a former Ring 58 member (who had joined the Ring back when he was sixteen!), Scott Cantrell. Scott started by pointing out the serendipity that when he joined the club twenty years ago, he had unknowingly used Stephen Knowles to help him with a puppet routine for his initiation performance! Scott talked about the influence this Ring has had on him, and he opened with an homage to Michael Messing doing his Color Changing Handkerchief routine. Scott's Jumbo Comedy Split Deck routine was a lot of fun with the help of Tim & Avery Pressley, and he closed the magic with an excellent Multiple Location effect – successfully finding ten chosen cards one at a time. Scott concluded the show with some great ball, club and knife juggling. While we certainly missed Bill Pryor, these two guys (plus Samuel) did a fantastic performance for us!

With about 30 people participating, our holiday "Dirty Magician" gift exchange was a wonderful, fun way to end the party. There was a little something for everyone...a bottle of wine, a set of framed magic stamps, Linking Rings, Godiva chocolate, a Pom-Pom stick, a \$25 Cheesecake Factory gift card, several coveted water tricks, and a 2006 Magic Magazine calendar just to name a few. Many happy wishes for a great Christmas and a wonderfully magical 2019!

Tom Vorjohan