



Tessa Evason tries to determine the time on a watch after a volunteer has moved the hands. Jeff Evason, her husband and fellow mentalist, is holding the watch.

Photos by G. Nick Lundskow — The Capital

Couple builds careers on abilities that are **all in their minds**

By THERESA WINSLOW
Staff Writer

Some people boast of a marriage so close that they know what their spouses are thinking.

Jeff and Tessa Evason of Annapolis know what *other people* are

thinking.

They make their living at it.

The Evasons, who've been a couple for 20 years and married for 15, are mentalists (think mind readers). They perform a series of exhibitions like guessing the serial number on a \$10 bill, guessing what number people are thinking of, and moving objects without touching them.

"They're just amazing," said Marc Sky, a mentalist and friend who lives Toronto. "I'm in awe of them."

Mr. Sky, who's known the Evasons for 15 years, said most mentalists work alone. "The fact they work together is quite unique. It's kind of amazing; hard to explain. They have a very dynamic act."

The Evasons hail from Canada, but their love of sailing brought them to Anne Arundel County two years ago. They keep their boat in Deale and spend a lot of their free time on the water. Since they travel most of the year for performances, though, their



Mentalist Jeff Evason moves a pair of glasses without touching them in a demonstration at his Annapolis home. Mr. Evason and his wife, Tessa, are world-renowned mind readers.

spare time is limited.

They've never performed locally (although they're open to the possibility), and mostly work at conventions, colleges and for corporations.

Amanda Vetelino caught their act while attending Rhode Island College and became so fascinated with their skills she's seen them five times in the past four years. She also corresponds with the Evasons by e-mail.

"There's no wires, no microphone, no nothing!" she said. "She can't see through (her) blindfold. I checked!"

Ms. Vetelino, who graduated two years ago and still lives in Rhode Island, described Mr. Evason as the "jokester" of the pair, while Mrs. Evason is more serious. Both are very friendly and approachable, she said.

"I don't think there's any dispute that they're the best in the world at what they do," said magician friend Glenn Ottaway, who also lives in the Toronto area. "I can think of no one that does what they do in terms of tricks. Every time I see them work, it's different, which is amazing."

Special effects

Tessa Evason is concentrating. A volunteer has just picked a word at random from a book and she's trying to guess what it is.

"I'm thinking cold," Ms. Evason says.

"I'm thinking outside," she

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continues.

Right on both counts.

Next, she tells the volunteer she "sees" an "m."

Again, she's on the money.

"It's mountainside," she proclaims.

Correct.

She won't tell how she does it, but again and again, with different feats, Ms. Evason amazes.

Whether they're using extrasensory perception, memory skills, telepathy, telekinesis, performing levitation or making predictions, the Evasons' act is an attention-getter.

"It's absolutely top-drawer," said Carol Priest of Toronto, who's booked shows for them for more than 15 years. "It's one of the most refined stage acts. The beauty of it is that there are people who have open minds, and people who are not open, (and they) still can't figure out how they do it. So you can't fail to entertain your crowd."

A few minutes before Ms. Evason guessed "mountainside," the couple gave another demonstration.

A volunteer chose a number between 50 and 100 and was told to concentrate on it.

Ms. Evason not only guessed the number (after one close but inaccurate guess), but at the same time divulged a chart she quickly drew up with four rows and four columns of numbers that all added up to the mystery number.

Next, it was Mr. Evason's turn.

He took a pair of glasses, put them on his living room table, and started slowly moving his hands around the spectacles. After a pause, the glasses started moving. Then with another motion, the glasses sat up on the table. Mr. Evason never came closer than a few inches from the glasses the whole time.

"There's an energy around us," he said. "You can do it, if you've had 15 to 20 years training."

DeShawn McNeil, a senior at McDaniel College in Westminster, took in the Evasons' show when they came to her school earlier this year. She left impressed.

"It was really good," she said. "It was almost creepy. The way they were just so dead-on. It was almost like this can't be happening. I'm not sure I'm a believer, but it was very interesting. They put on a good show."

A magical relationship

The Evasons met in Toronto in 1983. At the time, Ms. Evason was working as a model and Mr. Evason was doing voice-over work in radio.

Mr. Evason was also a magician, and a mutual friend hooked them up when he decided to use an assistant in his act. "We just connected," Mr. Evason said.

They kept doing magic together and the act grew. Over the years, though, they met another couple who performed a show geared around telepathy and ESP. They were looking for someone to pass their knowledge to, and the Evasons leapt at the chance. "We were in the right place at the right time," he said.

Ten years later, the Evasons switched their own act to mentalism. It took about five more years for them to really hone their act, Ms. Evason said.

Mr. Evason admitted it's difficult to "make it" as an entertainer, but said he



By G. Nick Lundskow — The Capital

Tessa Evason tries to guess what word a volunteer has randomly selected at random from a book. She chose correctly, saying the volunteer was pointing to "mountainside."

just kept plugging away. "It's a tough thing, but when you're 20 years old, you have a lot of room for forgiveness," he said.

Added Ms. Evason, "I just had a strong pull to do it."

Both are now in their early 40s, and it's easy to tell they still love putting on a show. "We just feel at home onstage," Mr. Evason said. "I think it's the best feeling in the world. Any performer would say the same thing."

In a promotional video, Mr. Evason works the crowd while Ms. Evason stands onstage wearing a blindfold, ready to tell someone in the audience the identity of a person in a picture the audience member is holding. When she guesses correctly, members of the audience rock back in their chairs with surprise.

The tape features clips from a performance at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas and other venues. The Evasons also have performed around the world.

"They're so quick, so slick," said Elwood Saracuse, who's booked them in Canada and known them for 10 years. "I thought they were good right from the get-go."

Mr. Saracuse said he's particularly amazed that Ms. Evason can guess the name of someone in a picture she's never seen before. "It's seemingly impossible, but they do it," he said.

Mr. Evason was always good with magic and Ms. Evason was always good with numbers and predictions. As a youngster, she was called "a child who knew" by grown-ups, she said.

The Evasons don't ask people to believe

in ESP or other mental abilities; they just want them to enjoy the show. They also do not claim to be psychics and shy away from that term.

When they take questions from audience members after shows, the two most frequently asked questions, beyond wanting to know how they did a certain part of the act, concern talking with the dead and divulging winning lottery numbers. On both counts, the Evasons said they can't help.

Their mental abilities can come in handy in real life, though. When they were shopping for a car, for instance, they started talking about what they do, and ended up getting a lower price after astounding the salesman with a few examples. And once, at the airport, performing a few demonstrations sped them through a few lines.

But they make no claim to getting things right 100 percent of the time.

"Do we ever fail? Yes!" Ms. Evason said. "We've been doing this for years. We know how to turn things around."

The Evasons also don't feel they're different from other people. Ms. Evason said they've just let their mental abilities develop with lots of training.

"People feel mind readers know everything they think," she said. "It's a good thing that's not possible."

For more information on the Evasons, go to their Web site, www.evason.com.twinslow@capitalgazette.com

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