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Saturday, September 13, 2008, 10

[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Entertainment](#) [Life](#) [Blogs](#) [Photos](#) [Video](#) [myCommunity](#)
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### Magician teaches kids tricks to recycling

*"When you don't need it, turn it off," he said, tipping a filled water bottle upside down and removing his fingers to show he had the powers to make the water stay inside the bottle.*

by **Kathleen Thurber**  
Midland Reporter-Telegram

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By **Kathleen Thurber**

Staff Writer

Emphatically puffing into a clear balloon, magician John Maverick paused to tell more than 350 students at South Elementary on Thursday to watch closely as he was preparing to complete his favorite trick.

Maverick tied the balloon off and reached for a long needle that he slowly brought toward the balloon as the rows of children covered their ears in anticipation. Poking it through the balloon, Maverick then "magically" pierced holes in the balloon without popping it as the students' mouths opened in surprise.

"This is one of my favorite magic tricks because I get to make a mess," he said, changing his voice and bending slightly as he popped the balloon causing a roar of laughter in the gymnasium behind him.

But, Maverick said, inching toward the purpose of his magic show that he performed at six Midland elementary schools this week, whenever he makes a mess he's always sure to clean it up, and, to recycle whatever waste he can.

Maverick was brought from Austin by Keep Midland Beautiful and performed in schools that have actively participated in KMB's phone book recycling programs, Adopt-A-Spot or other clean-up programs, said KMB's litter prevention coordinator Catarina Nava.

Maverick went on to make an 8-foot poll appear out of a small paper lunch sack and used it to demonstrate the about 8 feet of trash an average American family tosses each week. He then marked off parts of the poll to show the more than 50 percent of that trash that is recyclable and quizzed the kids on what things they shouldn't throw away pulling a milk jug, rubber chicken and other various items out of his trash can.

After antics with a joke-telling skunk puppet and a game of trash ball, Maverick showed the group a 5-gallon bucket of water that he said would weigh 40 pounds if full and encouraged children to turn off the faucet when brushing their teeth and to take shorter showers as the average shower uses 320 pounds of water.

"When you don't need it, turn it off," he said, tipping a filled water bottle upside down and removing his fingers to show he had the powers to make the water stay inside the bottle.

A group of sixth-grade boys sitting toward the back whispered to each other about how Maverick had accomplished the trick and then admitted



their theories were unfounded when Maverick said the magic word and let the water pour out.

Eight-year-olds Angel Ruiz and Maribel Ramirez laughed as Maverick performed his last trick where a drawing of mother Earth started talking and moving its eyes, which they said was their favorite part of the show.

Teachers agreed with the girls that the presentation was helpful in teaching kids about recycling and conservation, though a few instructors admitted the show may have been a touch too long for the fidgety kindergartners seated up front.

Maverick said he's received letters from administrators at other schools who've said after his shows they notice their campuses have less litter and that he knows at least part of his message is picked up by those watching.

"I don't do this show for me. I don't do this show for you," he said, to the students. "I do it for the Earth."

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- State and National
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- High School Football
- HS Football
- Standings

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- TV
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- Cars