

This show is hypnotizing

The most mystifying stage performers will tell you there's no secret wires or trap doors in their acts, but hypnotist Jennifer Harris Balch actually means it.

"People have this expectation that hypnosis is this magical kind of thing," she said. "The reality of it is that it's just relaxation. People are kind of shocked when they find out."

She begins her hour-long shows with that explanation to dispel any fears of the audience. She then selects 12 to 15 eager volunteers and puts them into a sleep-like state of repose. That's when things might get wacky.

"The cool thing is that I don't have a pre-set show," she said.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Balch
Hypnotist Jennifer Balch, who comes from a family of hypnotists, will be performing daily at the Umatilla County Fair.

Because people respond to hypnosis differently, she'll play off

what will work for those on stage. Sometimes she'll tell the participants they're experiencing different smells. Sometimes she'll say she's invisible and buzz around the stage causing mischief.

"We can do dancing; we can do singing," she said. "It's all kinds of stuff."

But one thing is for certain: Every show will be clean and child appropriate, Balch promises. She stays funny without sacrificing standards, never wanting to embarrass or degrade those who put themselves in the spotlight.

Her dedication to keeping things family friendly stems from the fact that she spent her childhood around hypnotist shows.

Balch's mother became a hyp-

noterapist to treat her handicapped younger sister. And when Balch's father, an investment banker, developed stomach ulcers, he finally agreed to hypnosis. The relief from his illness inspired him to become a stage hypnotist. Balch was nine years old, and she'd tag along to watch the spectacle. Today, both she and her sister are professional hypnotists.

"I don't like to compete with my dad and sister," she said. She remains a full-time stay-at-home-mom in Yakima, Wash., performing across the Pacific Northwest when her family's schedule is full.

She advises fairgoers to come in with an open mind and consider volunteering.



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 Fri. Aug. 11 • 7pm La Marca de Tierra Caliente <i>Domador de la Sierra</i> Los Canarios de Michoacan	 Sat. Aug. 12 • 9pm Great White	<p style="margin: 0;">RESERVED TICKETS ON SALE NOW!</p> <p style="margin: 0;">ONLY \$12</p> <p style="font-size: small;">(does not include admission)</p> <p style="margin: 0;">PREMIUM SEATING \$20</p> <p style="font-size: small;">(does not include fair admission)</p>

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