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Why would you light your head on fire? Talking with performers at Buskerfest

BY: Alexandra Kazia

But for a certain group of people, street performing became their life; a full-time gig driven by a need to explore their creative goals, reach out and entertain ordinary strangers. Many of those people who have made busking their way of life were at the [Scotiabank BuskerFest](#), an annual event in St. Lawrence Market that showcases international street performing acts of magic, contortion, acrobatics and music. It's organized by and supports [Epilepsy Toronto](#) and functions as its largest fund raiser. This year's BuskerFest ran from August 23 to 26.

Dr. Charlotte Tann and her husband, Professor Archibald Floss, run [the Mental Floss Sideshow](#) and were at Buskerfest this weekend.

"We perform sideshow feats of human daring," Tann said. "Like walking on broken glass, lying on beds of nails [and] something called the human blockhead—which includes a hammer, a nail and my good husband's face," says Tann.

Although the latter may also be their unique key to a happy marriage, living off their act isn't the path to absolute financial security. The pair has been performing together for six years and recently made the move to just outside of Milton, Ont. from the United Kingdom in hopes of pursuing their craft on a full-time basis.

"We did have day jobs back in the U.K. before we moved, but we both put in lots of time and commitment into the show and we really needed to give it an opportunity to survive," Floss said. "I was working as a performing artist technician in education and my wife was a venue manager, so we had good jobs. But it was restrictive because you couldn't say yes to gigs at the drop of a hat."

The sideshow couple quit their jobs and made the move back to Ontario, where Tann originally comes from.

"To try and do a move like that in the U.K. at the moment is pretty much suicidal because of the financial situation, so we came here and we've had more success this year—I would say—than in any of the previous years," Floss said, adding that he loves the city's space and weather.