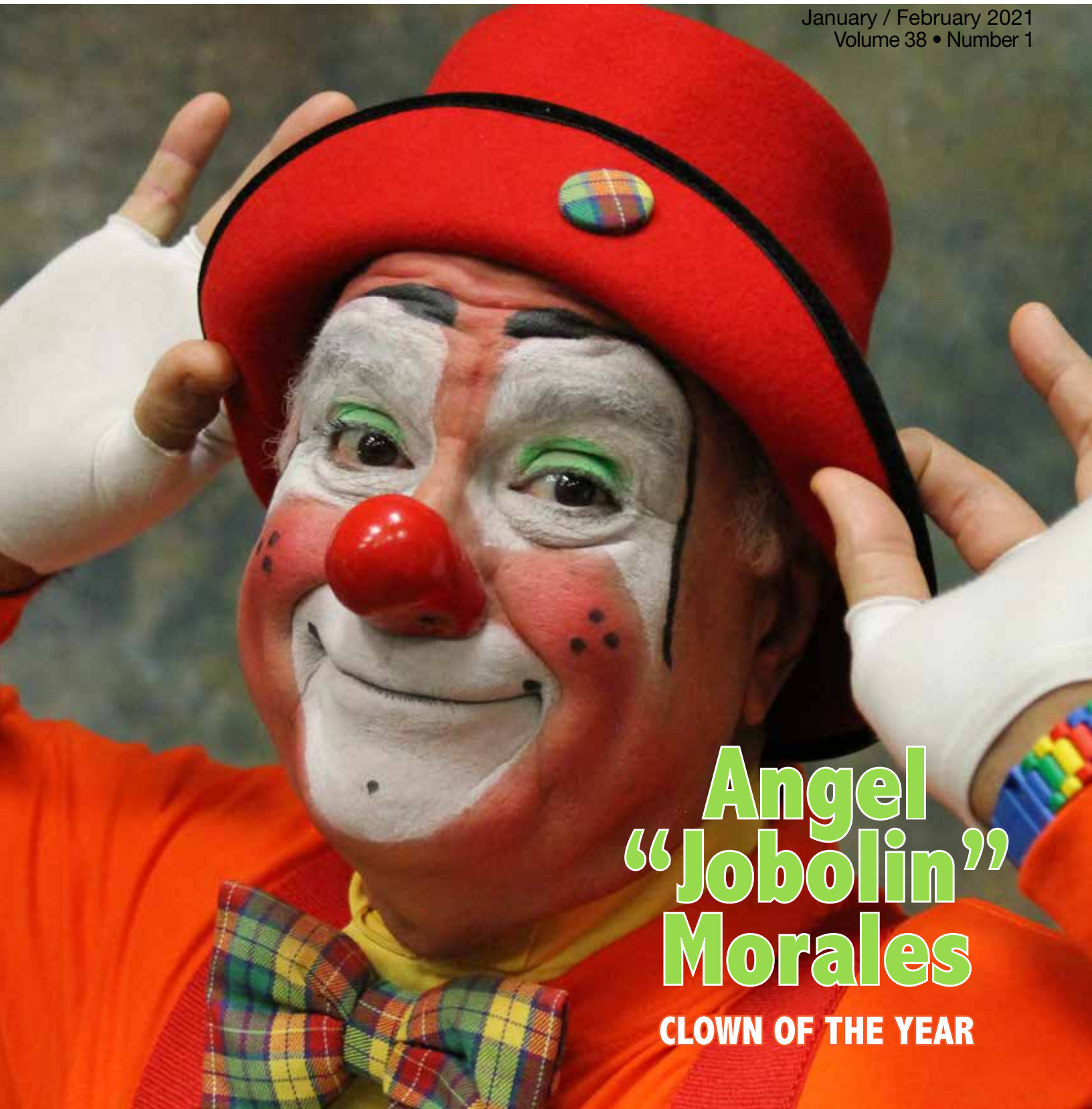


# THE NEW CALLIÖPE

For Members of Clowns of America International

January / February 2021  
Volume 38 • Number 1



Angel  
"Jobolin"  
Morales

CLOWN OF THE YEAR

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Rose Cardenas

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# COAI's Clown of the Year

## Angel "Jobolin" Morales



Angel Morales after his lecture at a COAI Convention.

By Rose Cardenas

Angel Morales watched a clown perform at his son's sixth birthday party and thought, "I can do that!" And he did. The following year, he was the performer at Angel Jr.'s party. Thirty-five years later, Angel is known as "The Maestro" of clowning.

Angel wasn't a newcomer to the performing arts. He had been a stand-up comedian while he was in college in New York City. In addition, he recalls when Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus came to his neighborhood in New York. He lived near the old Madison Square Garden, and he was there to see the circus parade arrive in town with all its animals and performers. As he sat in the bleacher watching the show, his friends declared how they'd love to become acrobats or animal trainers. Angel looked and said, "I want to be a clown."

Though he picked up some skills right away and took on the name "*Kasi Largo*," or "Almost Tall," it was hard for Angel to find makeup and other supplies for his clowning performances. He learned to improvise, becoming a goofy clown with a little magic show, but he soon sought additional training at the Mooseburger Clown Arts Camp in Minnesota. He especially appreciated the instruction he received there for doing hospital clowning.

After he finished at the camp, he immediately began teaching others what he had learned, so they, too, could bring joy to those who needed it during difficult days. Angel has now worked for many years bringing joy and laughter to residential homes for seniors. He's been disappointed that hospitals in Puerto Rico, where Angel and his family have lived for many years, do not allow clowning as they do in the continental United States. He'd like to see that change. Meanwhile, he has spent his time with senior adults.

Angel's development as a clown was a slow, steady progression. He started out as a happy hobo, but after some advice from his mentors, his makeup transitioned to an auguste look and he became "Jobolin the Clown." In his medical clowning, he also performs as "*Mastegas*," or "Polka Dots."

In addition to his time with seniors, Angel performs unique bilingual shows for birthday parties and other events, particularly at U.S. military installations. Angel is a veteran himself, and after leaving the military, he spent his career working as a "civilian soldier." It is important for him to bring joy to active service members, as well as the general population. One of his best memories of performing was an experience he had at the local VA hospital. He did a show and enjoyed the interaction he had with his audience, but one man sitting in a wheelchair at the back of the room looked away every time Angel made eye contact with him. At the end of the show, he walked up to the man and did a magic trick which made him laugh. The nurses came to him later and said, "You made him laugh! He has been here for four years, and he's never smiled!" Angel says, "Clowning is the key that opens people's hearts." He loves to see the joy and hear the laughter of those he touches with his performances.

Angel also enjoys giving back to the clowning arts, as well. He has been an



Left: Television coverage (Channel 18, La mega) featuring Angel with local Alley members and independent Joeys. Right: Angel works Circus Fest in San Juan, 2018.

active part of COAI for more than twenty-five years. He's a member of three of the Clown Alleys in Puerto Rico, 410, 84, and 204, and served for years as the Latin Regional Vice President. He has enjoyed participating in COAI Conventions for many years, and even competed at his very first convention and placed in the Top Thirteen. Over the years, Angel has gone on to compete in many categories, especially enjoying single and group skits and paradeability. He enjoyed competing in makeup, but later he realized that the categories which were more active and more strongly exhibited his personality and his character were a better fit for him.

Angel makes a great effort to invest in helping new clowns. He guides them by saying, "Clowning has a lot of faces. Choose one you like." Clowning involves many varied skills, including storytelling, games, singing, and magic. Angel encourages new clowns to choose one aspect on which to focus. He also encourages them to take as many seminars as they can and to allow the clown

character to develop slowly. He lectures on performing at birthday parties, describing what equipment is necessary, how to perform for different age groups, how to prepare, and how to do comedy and magic. He also lectures on makeup, costuming, and working with children.

Angel stresses that clowning is not an easy career path. He says, "If you want to be a clown, you have to have it in your heart. You don't do clowning for the paycheck." He also advises, "Don't think of yourself as better than others. Just be yourself and be respectful."

Just as he chooses to invest in others' lives, Angel has greatly appreciated those who have invested in his. He has grown from the tips and advice those who have gone before have given him, and he is especially thankful for the relationships he has built with those with whom he served on the COAI board.

Covid-19 has been a challenge this year for Angel and his clown friends. They haven't been able to meet together for many months, and all performances have been cancelled. However, a few



Top to bottom: Angel "Jobolin" Morales with performing partner Kan Kan the Clown. "Jobolin" at the 2013 COAI Convention in Richmond, Virginia. PHOTO BY MERILYN BARRETT The September/October 1995 issue of *The New Calliope* promoted the 1996 COAI Convention with the theme, "Clowning Under The Sun." Members of the convention board, left to right: Gloria Vazquez, Pedro Santos, Angel Morales (convention chair), Luis Pastor, Blanca robes, and Eugenio Vega (convention co-chair). Visiting the Children's Centro Medico Hospital in Rio Piedras, with local clowns. Angel's character is named "Dr. Mas Pekas" ("Dr. More Frekkles").



Below: Jobolin (right) with the famous Mexican clown, Bobo, at a Sonia Bernards clown seminar in Puerto Rico.



Top to bottom: Latin Region members—including those from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Puerto Rico—pose for a COAI Convention photo. A local television program, Puerto Rico Gana, featured host Alex DJ with Angel Morales and other alley members. Competing in Group Skit at the 2013 COAI Convention in Richmond, Virginia. Left to right: Angel Morales, Jesus Ortega, Julio Capacetti, and Jorge Adomo. PHOTO BY MERILYN BARRETT

Right: Preparing for an event for the children at the Army Base in Fort Buchanan.





*Left: Jobolin and Cheri Venturi at a COAI Convention in the 1980s. Above: Angel takes a group photo at an Easter celebration for children of his church San Miguel in 2018. Kan Kan and Jobolin were featured with a magic show and balloon sculpting.*



*A local convention hosted by Sonia Bernard during the year 2000.*

bright spots have emerged as Angel has taken advantage of this time of isolation. His Alley has kept in close contact chatting with a WhatsApp group chat. In addition, he has been able to meet via Zoom with a clown alley in the Dominican Republic. This has opened new opportunities for relationships and growth with a group of people he would otherwise not have known.

A longer-range challenge facing clowning has been the lower numbers of new clowns involved in COAI. Angel describes that Latin communities are somewhat different. Clowning in the Caribbean, Central, and South America is a long-standing tradition that involves families more than individuals. He has greatly appreciated the involvement of his own family in the clowning arts, and Angel is very devoted to his family. That young six-year-old, Angel Jr., has grown up, along with his siblings, Jerry and Christian. They have enjoyed being involved with their father. Angel's wife, Antonia, has shared his life as well as being his assistant and helper in his shows. He also enjoys sharing his love of clowning with his "treasures," his three grandchildren, Alejandro, Akira, and Kai. He continues to believe that clowning will continue as that family tradition is built into new communities and work is done to include the younger generation as much as possible. **TNC**



## From the President

Adam Schill

Hello, COAI!

Our board is moving along on a number of different projects, and we hope to see you soon at our virtual convention or one of our monthly Zoom Booms! We have one potential spot on the board that may be opening up soon. If you're interested in giving back to our great organization and helping lead us into the future, please email me, and we'll see if we can get you plugged in.

I want to use the rest of my space for a bit of an editorial, if I may. I might ruffle a few feathers with this, but that's okay. As most of you know, that's not really new to me.

I want you to think of The Beatles and the length of their careers. Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr are still going, almost sixty years after their rise to stardom. I'm guessing, if John and George were still with us (and Yoko hadn't gotten in the way), that it's possible they would still be performing occasionally and giving us new music from time to time. Why do you think this is? Why do you think that they have been hailed as one of the most influential bands of all time?

Here's my theory. They knew how to adapt to their audience. They realized that times change, and with that change, they must adapt to remain relevant. They were ahead of their times with this adaptation. Think about the differences in their look, sound, and lyrical content between their first U.S. appearance in 1962 on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and their middle and later albums, such as the 1967 album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and the 1970 album, *Let It Be*. You will note three completely different looks, sounds, and themes.

You may be asking, "Where are you going with this? What do The Beatles have to do with clowning?" Other than the brightly colored fashion in the Sgt. Pepper era, we as clowns also need to be mindful of our audiences. How should we adapt as an industry to remain relevant? It's not a secret that, other than a small handful of adaptive performers, "organizational clowning" as a whole is missing the mark in attracting the next generation of entertainers. Clowning has changed. Our audiences have changed. The world has changed.

As industry support organizations, we should be at the forefront, leading the charge in helping clowns adapt with the times and grow. Many times lately, I have noticed that a newer clown, or occasionally even a clown who has been in the industry for a long time who has a more open-minded outlook on clowning, is not treated well by some of those who have been in organized clowning for a long time. I want us all to remember, the word "clown" is as much, if not more, a verb as it is a noun. There is no official definition of the noun "clown," what one should look like, or the type of performance they should do. Sure, we have competition rules that were written over thirty years ago that dictate what some people feel like is the right way to look, but outside of our organization's competitions, those rules have no merit or meaning.

There are amazing clowns who wear no makeup at all or don't look quite up to the standards that a lot of us have placed on appearance over the years. There are amazing clowns who only perform in burlesque shows for adults. There are even, dare I even say it, amazing clowns who perform at haunted houses around Halloween. While none

of these styles are my personal style, I still have great respect and admiration for those who do because they're out there working, clowning, and furthering our art.

I have personally seen clowns that fit into all those different categories demonized on Facebook and told that they were not *real* clowns because they did not fit into a certain box. I have seen every example of clown mentioned above dragged down over the last year or two, sometimes by those who many of us would consider leaders in our industry. Why do we need to be so focused on another clown's version of clowning and whether it fits into our own box of what a clown should be? I think that we should all rip those boxes apart and send them to the recycling bin. We need to work together to advance our art.

Clowns are no longer the mainstays in pop culture as they once were. Ringling Bros. is no more, so kids are not exposed to circus clowning as much as they once were due to the scarcity of mud shows and the limited budgets of the remaining shows, leading to the reduction of the number of clowns within the shows. Ronald McDonald has essentially been retired from the McDonald's corporation; he is only seen a couple of times a year at major events instead of regular in-store visits and school shows. Bozo has not been on TV in a couple of decades.

We are what's left. We need to adapt and fit our audience's needs and stop demanding that the audience's needs don't evolve. We are no longer living in the 1980s and 1990s when every small town in the country had multiple full-time clowns booked solid every weekend doing multiple birthday parties. We have to work for it now and show our clients that clowns are not, in fact, irrelevant.

Our COAI Board has talked at great length about this issue, and we are almost all on the same page that we need to be industry leaders in the change of organized clowning. Will you help us?

TNC



## From the Director of Education

Alene Kraus

No matter what your professional status is, it always helps to plan.

Plan for six months. How will you apply and grow your three-month plan?

What holidays, fairs, festivals are coming up?

How will you market yourself and your craft?

Continue to add layers to your plan.

Your plan can be flexible. Once you begin this creative process of deliberate planning, it becomes second nature. I look at the year as spokes in a bicycle wheel. Each spoke has a clown card with a plan on it. It just keeps clicking along! You will succeed when you can see yourself being successful. **TNC**

**W**e all hope for a busy and prosperous 2021. How do we turn our hopes into action to make that happen? We need to be thoughtful and deliberate in our approach. We plan!

Do you have a three-month, six-month, or twelve-month business plan? It does not matter if you are a full-time working clown or not. What can you do to spread more joy?

What action do you see yourself taking to have a more prosperous year and share more smiles? Some people believe in visualization, responding to the prompt, "See yourself succeed, and you will succeed." Here are some concrete ways to accomplish that.

Plan for only three months. What do you want to accomplish over the next three months?

If you want more gigs, what action will you take to book them?

If you need a plan to contact prior clients, how will you accomplish that?

### LIABILITY INSURANCE UPDATE

As a member of COAI, one of your benefits is the option of purchasing performer liability insurance at a reduced rate. Our new insurance company, American Specialty Insurance, is a branch of Brown & Brown. Brown & Brown transferred the policies to American Specialty Insurance and kept the same website name, [www.insurecoai.org](http://www.insurecoai.org). The website is more user friendly and their customer service has improved. When you sign into the website, be sure your membership is up to date and have your member number handy. **To reach American Specialty Insurance by phone, call 1-877-441-4011.**

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# THE PROFESSIONAL BALLOON TWISTER

By Richard “Design-O” Smith  
with Rachel Strnad

This is the moment you’ve been waiting for! Perhaps. In my last article, I discussed the essentials of a face painting kit and how to present yourself as a professional face painter. This issue, we’ll tackle professional balloon twisting.

As I said last time, much of this may seem redundant if you read my face painting article. However, since there has become such a distinction between face painters and balloon artists, I thought it best to address each art form individually.

It should go without saying that, as the face of your business, you should pay as much attention to your physical appearance as you do to every other aspect of your business. Do you look clean and professional? Even if you don’t have a specific costume or uniform, you shouldn’t show up to an event in the clothes you wear every day.

Before you even book your first gig, do you have information about yourself and your business in an easily accessible format such as a card or a flyer? This should clearly explain what you have to offer, whether you do birthday parties, corporate work, decorating, and how best to contact you. Creating such a flyer ahead of time not only makes finding new clients easier when you’re on the job, it helps you figure out the scope of your work. Uncertainty about your offerings leads to confusion with clients and potential customer dissatisfaction because you’ve promised more than you can deliver.

Along those lines, once you’ve decided what you offer, make sure you continue to further build those skills through courses and conventions. Practice continually to perfect your designs and build speed, especially if you want to do corporate work and big events. Such clients pay well, but are also expecting hundreds of balloons in the few hours for which they’ve hired you. Practice will ensure quality in the quantities they’re looking for.

I also recommend practicing blowing up the balloons. Modern technology has given us the electric pump, but filling balloons still takes time. Once you know how long it takes to create a sculpture from inflating to tying off, you know how many sculptures you can make in an hour, which in turn helps you know what you can offer clients depending on the event. Practice in filling and sculpting also helps you know how much to fill a balloon for the best sculpture. Too tight, it won’t twist. Too loose, and it loses its shape.

Your balloon repertoire is affected by the type of balloon art you choose to pursue. Smaller scale birthday parties and such may allow you more time to create complex designs, since you will need less of them. If your artistic bent runs to making one-of-a-



kind creations, this may be the route you want to take. Just remember, if you make something unique for one person at a party, that may be what you’re making the rest of the event. Be prepared to shift gears. Or, save your experiments for balloon decorating.

I recommend creating a set of simple designs if you plan on doing larger events. As I said before, such clients



are expecting hundreds of balloons in the time they hire you, so having some simple designs you can do in seconds is key. If someone asks for something off menu, maybe have a design that's easily customizable with add-ons. Stickers and Sharpies are your friends in this instance.

Whether you're doing corporate or private work, also make sure ahead of time that your design selection doesn't contain anything that might be offensive to your client. Balloon swords, for example, are very popular and easy to make, but if you've been hired for a World Peace event or something of that kind, they may frown on you handing out weapons, however harmless.

As to your kit itself, make sure you've tested any new balloons to make sure they are good quality and won't spontaneously pop under abuse. Your young clients especially will likely be carrying



your sculptures around and playing with them for the rest of the day. The balloons need to hold up the entire time.

You also need a pump that will last you a long time. It's easy to get a cheap pump, but I recommend shopping around and testing, testing, testing. It's not just a matter of the pump lasting, but will you last with it? After blowing up a hundred balloons, are you in the early stages of carpal tunnel? Multiple different pumps might also be a good idea. I usually have my upright cannister pump and an extra hand pump with me. Sometimes I might bring my electric pump, depending on how close I am to an outlet.

Beyond your pump and your balloons, you will also need something to store and organize your balloons, a table cover (not entirely necessary, but I highly recommend it for a professional look), balloon accessories, and your design card.

As you can see in the picture, I usually have about three bags with me, including my balloon apron. I have a few balloon aprons, depending on my costume, and I recommend them as organizational tools. You might not always be given a table and chair. The balloon apron allows you more flexibility. I also use a specially made balloon bag, which you can find from balloon artist supplier. What I do

NOT recommend is throwing all your main supplies in a duffel bag. You'll waste time trying to find things.

One thing not included in the photos, but which can be an excellent time saver, is a fold-out hamper of full balloons or pre-made sculptures. I often blow up my balloons ahead of time if I know roughly how many children will be at an event, which shaves seconds off each sculpture and often allows me to make more per child. If you have time and space, even pre-twisting some so you can start working as soon as you arrive might be a good idea. Just remember that the more things you have, the more you will need to keep track of and set up, which might add back on the time you saved in preparation. Again, lots of practice will help you streamline this process.

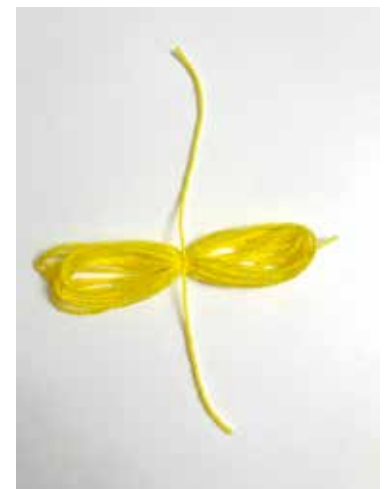
And there you have it! Design-O's tips for professional balloon sculpting. But I want to hear from you, too! What does *your* balloon kit look like? What tools and practices have *you* found that makes your balloon artist business thrive? Please let me know through Facebook or e-mail. And send me pictures!

I hope to see you all in the center ring someday.

Bump a nose!

# JUNIOR JOEYS

By Regina “Cha Cha” Wollrabe, *Junior Joeys Director*



## Let's Make a Sock Puppet!

Hello, Jr. Joeys!

Why do golfers wear two pairs of socks? In case they get a hole in one!

If you actually *do* get a hole in one, you end up with a single sock, similar to what happens when you put socks in the dryer—sometimes one disappears!

I have so many single socks, yet I can't seem to part with them. When I'm desperate I don't hesitate to wear mismatched socks. After all, I am a clown.

The other day it occurred to me that I could use some of those extra socks for puppets. Then I thought you'd like to join me in making sock puppets. I hope these photos inspire you to make one. These were made with old socks, glue, and pom-poms and googly eyes from a craft store. You can also use buttons for the eyes.

To attach the hair, eyes, and nose, you can use hot glue, but make sure your parents are helping. Glue guns are very hot and can be dangerous. Liquid glue works, too. It just takes longer to set. I experimented with a glue stick and it also worked. I put four or five layers on the objects and glued them to the sock.

By the way, there are many videos on YouTube on how to make a sock puppet. Some of them have different approaches as to where to put the mouth, eyes, hair, and nose. Watch a few before you start. Then go ahead and make the style you like best. When you put on your sock puppet, watch it come alive!

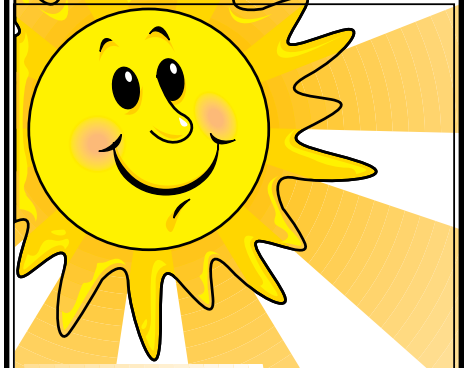


The pictures I'm sharing here are the puppets that elementary school students I'm working with will be making. We dyed the socks blue to match our school colors. If you do end up making a sock puppet, or if you have made one before, send me a photo of you and your puppet. I would love to see it! Email it to [coaijr-joey@gmail.com](mailto:coaijr-joey@gmail.com).

Get creative—your options are endless. Let your imagination fly! Have fun with your new little imaginary friends.

### MAKING A SOCK PUPPET IS EASY

- Make the hair by wrapping yarn around cardboard. Then take off the loops of yarn and tie another piece of yarn around it. Cut the loops.
- Glue or sew the hair where your top knuckles will be.
- Glue googly eyes on to pom-poms.
- Glue the eyes and pom-poms to the puppet where you want the eyes.
- Glue a pom-pom on for the nose.
- Then give your puppet a hand (and a voice) and have fun!



## Our Good Cheer List

Please take a moment to spread a few words of good cheer with a card or note to one of these members.

**Ruth "Sweet Sue" Hoppe**  
1355 Shannon Dr., Apt 103  
Iowa City, IA 52246

**Miriam "Senorita Soto" Kleinberger**  
2 Maple Lane North  
Loudonville, NY 12211

**Kathy "Noodles" Gurak**  
18 Park Avenue  
Garfield, NJ 07026

**Richard "Design-O" Smith**  
97 Grafton Street, Back Door  
Shrewsbury, MA 01545-5646

**Fran Etkorn**  
1015 Champion Circle  
Longmont, CO 80503

**St. Joseph's Manor**  
**Fran "Cuddles" Smith**  
6448 Main St  
Trumbull, Ct 06611

### *Good Cheer Chairperson:*

**Crissy "Miz Daisy" Melnitzke**  
[crissy@mizdaisyentertainment.com](mailto:crissy@mizdaisyentertainment.com)  
863-221-4183

## A Letter from COAI President Adam Schill

### COAI CONVENTION MOVES TO ONLINE VENUE



Dear COAI friends,

I'm sure, like many of us, you have been holding your breath to see what direction the ever-changing Covid-19 pandemic will go in regard to our ability to effectively and safely host our 2021 COAI Convention in Niagara Falls, which was to take place April 6-11, 2021.

Currently, the state of New York has several very strict restrictions for out-of-state travelers. Everyone must be tested for Covid-19 prior to entering the state and quarantine for several days upon reaching their destination. You must take another Covid-19 test within four days of entering the state. Restaurants are closed to dine-in traffic, among many other restrictions. Furthermore, New York imposes restrictions on the number of people allowed to gather in one room, which severely limits our ability to host classes, competitions, and programs. Of course, the most important consideration of both of our hosting alley and COAI is the health and safety of our members.

Jim and Connie (our convention hosts) came to our recent monthly board meeting and expressed these concerns. The board gave them approval to explore getting out of their contracts with the hotel and convention center. (That has been the big killer for many conventions across the country as hotels don't generally like to give up money by releasing people from contracts.) Thankfully, both the hotel and convention center fully released The Niagara Clown Alley from their contracts.

Unfortunately, this means we will not be able to meet face to face for our 2021 COAI Convention. However, we do have good news! Jim and Connie will be meeting with a committee of board members in the coming weeks to flesh out a plan to have a virtual convention for 2021! Many of you have enjoyed our recent Zoom Booms. Now imagine several days of multiple Zoom Booms back-to-back from some of the top instructors in the country. That's what we'll have!

Because our overhead will be lower than it would be for a physical convention, we will be adjusting our registration prices and passing the savings on to you. Once we know what the new convention price will be, we will pass on information for registering and receiving a refund for the difference in price or a complete refund for those who do not want to attend virtually. Again, we will let you know once we have the details figured out. Please do not start swarming Jim and Connie with questions or refund requests until we have that done.

Jim and Connie had already purchased the convention T-shirts and put together goodie bags, and those will still be sent to all those who previously registered for the 2021 convention.

The hotel has automatically cancelled all registrations, so you should be receiving a cancellation notice soon. If the end of the week comes and you haven't heard anything, you may call the hotel to make sure it was taken care of, but that shouldn't be necessary.

Thanks so much for your patience and understanding during this crazy year. COAI has the best members, and we couldn't do it without you!

See you in the funny papers!

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

JASMINE “JUST JAZZY” EGGERT

By Jasmine “Just Jazzy” Eggert



It happened upon the road to Clowndum by accident. My clown character, now known as “Just Jazzy,” was born August 1, 2018 in Omaha, Nebraska. During a Hula Hoop event, someone planted a seed that I should consider offering a birthday party service. After discussing the idea with a friend, it was suggested to me that I call Judy “Dear Heart” Quest to learn more about clowning and listen to her story. Little did I know that a phone call would change the entire trajectory of my life! She recommended I attend an Alley meeting, and I’ll never forget how I was welcomed with open arms. Also, these clowns were funny! I wanted to learn how to be funny. So, I stayed.

I have said and continue to say, “Heck, yes!” to a wide variety of clowning opportunities that come my way, from family reunions to birthday parties to events that promote the art of clowning, such as “Real Clowns Have More Fun.” Wherever there is an opportunity to spread fun and joy, and demonstrate what it means to be a *real* clown, Just Jazzy is there!

When asked what is my favorite thing to do when clowning, my response is, “Clown!” I *love* to unleash Just Jazzy’s personality upon the audience, spreading joy and cheer everywhere. I am always striving to juice up and polish Just Jazzy’s character. From vocal accent practice and mannerism development to simply embracing her childlike nature, I absolutely cherish the process.

Wowzahs—I could go on for pages describing the precious moments I have experienced clowning. The first time Just Jazzy ventured out into the Omaha community was August 1, 2018, a Wednesday morning. I joined a handful of Omaha Wild Clown-dum clowns at the Holy Family Church to help distribute food kits to the homeless. I will never forget my first interaction with a gentleman who smiled at the looks of a scrawny clown whirling a Hula Hoop. In that moment, I felt I was looking at myself, as I used to be a down-and-out human only a few years before. His smile was such a joyful gift, I felt humbled and grateful. The ability to help someone smile and show that you care is an amazing reward. I intend to continue on this joyful journey!

I will remain forever grateful to every single Omaha Wild Clown-dum member, American Clown Academy instructors, and peers who have so graciously shared knowledge, advice, and experiences with this clown pup. Clowning has enriched my life in a multitude of ways, and, as “Dear Heart” would say, “I have more fun than anybody oughta have!”

**TNC**

*This story is reprinted with permission from the award-winning newsletter of COAI Alley 147, Nose News, edited by Susie “Sparkles” Dorland.*

# POCKETS'S

## Kind of Cute



**Heather  
"Pockets"  
Wuersching**

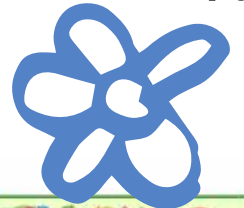
Just when Twaddles thought he had featured the last Gag Bag, Pockets found some more ideas to share with you. She is so thoughtful! She worries that Twaddles might get bored if he is not given something to do.

Gag Bags are a great way to break the ice and get some fun and laughter going with a minimum of effort. If you introduce this special gift with flair and enthusiasm, you may well create a long-term memory for your audience. Here are four great ideas that will be sure to excite your friends, family, and others. They may not be as excited when you hand them over, but hopefully they will see the humour in them, and someone will at least laugh if they hit you over the head with them.

We have set up a page of four labels which you can print and use if you do not want to design your own. Email me and ask for the PDF "Kind of Cute" labels, and I will send the page

**DONUT SEEDS:** Many people love a good donut, and it is widely believed that none are more addicted to donuts than local lawmen. You may have to grow these seeds in a very secure area to protect them from donut-loving police officers.

Musk-flavored Life Savers candy are in the bag. Other colors could be used, but this pink kind is the most appropriate.



**CRAZY PILLS:** Lately, the whole world seems to be in a mess. No wonder many of us are feeling a little crazy. This "medication" is for the relief of the desire to act in an inappropriate way. Take one pill to overcome the urge to strangle stupid people. Take two pills to avoid jail. If you see me without these pills, run!

In the bag are jellybeans of any color. Tic Tacs, Smarties, and any other capsule or pill-shaped candy would also be suitable.



# GAG BAGS

By Ted "Twaddles" White

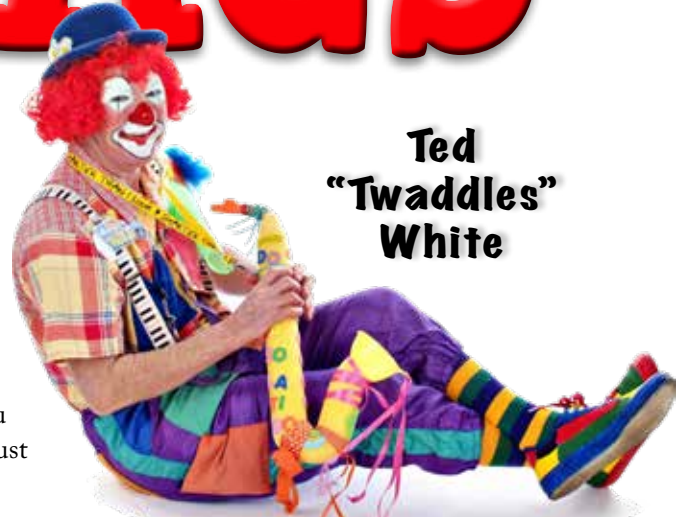
to you. All the previous sets of labels are still available if you want any of them, as well. I can send you the details of when they each appeared in *The New Calliope*, and you can check them out in The Vault on the COAI website, [www.mycoai.com](http://www.mycoai.com).

The clear plastic resealable bags I use are about four inches across the top, so these labels are four inches long. If you want to use narrower bags, you may prefer to have the page of labels sent to you as a JPG, and you can adjust the size to suit.

What has she put in the bags this time?

Most importantly have fun. Have fun making these bags and then have a lot more fun handing them out and interacting with people in front of you.

*Ted "Twaddles" White was the COAI International RVP, 2014–2020. Contact him by email at [twaddles2014@hotmail.com](mailto:twaddles2014@hotmail.com). TNC*



Ted  
"Twaddles"  
White

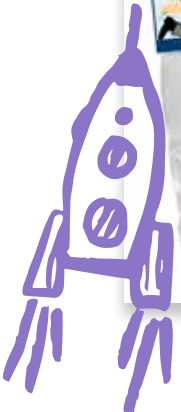


**PUNCTUALITY PILLS:** "I'm late, I'm late for a very important date." If you are one of those people who is never on time, here is the solution. This futuristic formula was prescribed by Dr. Justin Thyme of Tardy Laboratories.

In the bag are jellybeans of any color. Tic Tacs, Smarties, or any other capsule or pill-shaped candy could be used instead.



**SNORE STOPPER:** Do you snore loudly? Does someone you love? Here is the serious solution to sleepy sounds and snores, and most importantly, it is drug free.



# WORKING PRESCHOOLS

## PART ONE

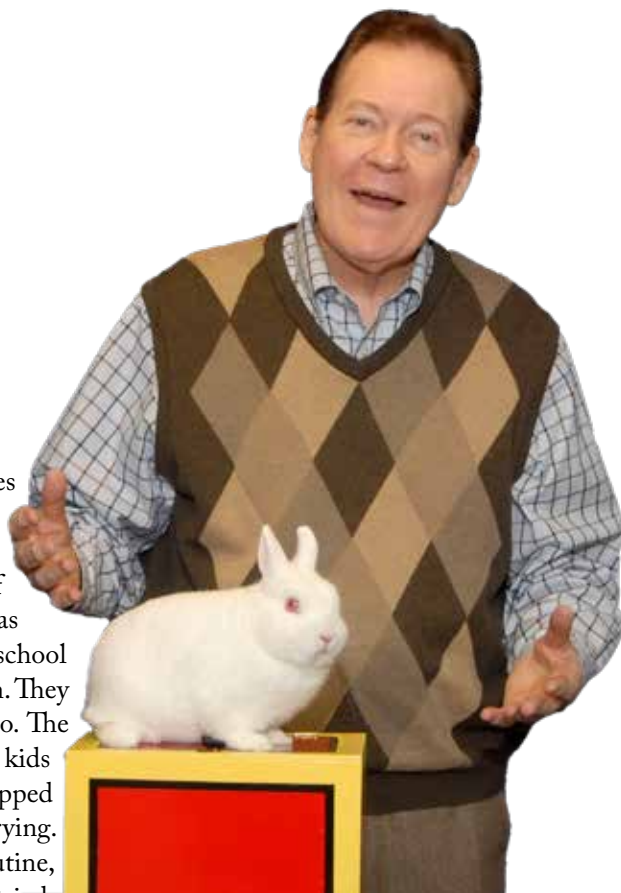
By David Ginn

On my birthday, June 13, 1985, I had one of my worst performing experiences ever. I had somehow managed to book twenty-five preschools and daycare center shows all over metro Atlanta. The first one was that day, and I arrived early to set up my school show for the 10 am performance. I carried in a lot of props and a sound system for speaking and music. By the appointed hour, I was ready to go. Hey, I knew what I was doing! I was the veteran of four hundred school shows yearly for the past fourteen years. Yes, I was a pro. In marched the children. They started by seating the two-year-olds right down front—the logical thing to do. The two-year-olds were followed by the threes, fours, and fives, with the school-age kids in the back. The moment the director introduced me, the trouble started. I stepped up to my microphone, and before I could say a word, a two-year-old started crying. He had to be taken out by a teacher. I began my Smokey the Bear Hot Book routine, and several more little ones started crying. I quickly put the fire book away and tried another school warm-up routine that only half worked. I moved on to the musical part, which went better. By then, I was shaken and not sure that all would end well.

Once I started talking again, I quickly realized that the three-year-olds were too young for some of the routines. I played to the school age kids at the back, who were out of school for summer break. That worked okay, but I lost the interest of the younger kids, and soon some of the two- and younger three-year-olds stood up and wandered off. I am sure glad I'd stopped doing doves before that day because if one had flown, it would have been all over. I pulled the show together, but I went home disappointed. It was not a good show. What had gone wrong? Well, lots of things, and those are the things I will address in these next two columns. I will share some things that I have learned the hard way, through experience, during the past twenty-four years since that awful day. If you want to save yourself a lot of headaches and heartaches, read on, and I'll tell you what I have learned about working with the five-and-under crowd.

**Seat them in reverse order.** John Cooper turned me on to this, and some teachers have fought with me over it, but trust me, *it works!* Seat the children in the opposite order from normal. Put the oldest ones down front, yes, the fives down front, and the fours, threes, and finally twos behind them. That keeps the youngest ones away from you. I'm over six feet tall, and I'm a man. Those little guys are used to being around

*David warms up the preschool audience by teaching some magic prior to the show.*



women. If they sit at my feet, and I look down on them, it's scary! Keep those two-year-olds at a distance from the action, and they'll be happy. If possible, set up a row of chairs behind the crowd and let the youngest group sit there. That's even better. By putting your fives or fours on the front row (sitting criss-cross), you'll have your reactors down front. They'll tell you to turn it around or it's up your sleeve, and that is exactly what you want! A teacher recently almost insisted she put the twos on the front row. I stood my ground and said, "No, I want them away from the action. That way they can enjoy it without getting frightened." "But they can't see," she insisted. "Yes, ma'am, they *can* see," I told her. "I am over six feet tall, the props are big, and I'll hold them up. Please trust me; it will be fine." Midway through that show, I looked back there and saw her laughing and enjoying the show with the two-year-olds. Yes, reverse order seating works. Thanks, John Cooper!



An appearing magic cane, comedy character silks, and colorful spring snakes add fun and surprises to David Ginn's preschool shows.

**No fire or loud noises.** My favorite elementary school warm-up trick is the Hot Book, either Smokey the Bear's life story or *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Elementary kids love it, even if the kindergarteners (five- and six-year-olds) are sitting down front. But the hot book and all fire tricks are definite nos-nos when it comes to preschool shows. Don't use them! One child crying due to fire ruins your show. The same is true for loud noises. Don't use the bang wand. Don't shoot any kind of gun, even a toy cap gun. And for goodness sake, don't pop a balloon! Yes, I started out one school year with Balloon to Rabbit. Even the rabbit didn't save the day because the moment the balloon popped, the twos and threes started crying and didn't care about the live magic bunny. They were startled and scared by the noise. The bunny did not save the day. I quickly learned: no fire and no loud noises.

**Have them sit all the way down.** Do not allow the children to sit on their legs or knees. Instead, have them sit all the way down on their bottoms, but do not use any words for the bottom part of their bodies! "I need everyone to sit all the way down," I tell them. "Criss-cross, apple sauce, story style, pretzel style, off your knees, off your legs, no flutter, apple butter!" Yes, I say that to make them laugh, but it gets the point across. If children sit on their legs or knees, they tend to bounce up and down or even get up during the show. You don't want that. You want them sitting down.

Furthermore, I do not allow the main audience at preschool shows to sit in chairs. Why? Because after about three rows, nobody behind them can see the show. By putting them all on the floor, even if I stand on the same level, they are sitting, and they can all see the show.

**Open with a friendly warm-up.** As I have taught in my lectures and books, I open every show with a comedy warm-up to get the kids responding. My preschool warm-up consists of three parts: First, I ask everybody to sit down, as explained above. Then, we do a clapping hands exercise. Finally, I try to get them laughing at something, even if it is at me! I smile and laugh a lot during this part to show the children that I am friendly and like them. They understand that right away. Watch my Spider warm-up, and you'll see what I mean.

**Employ an easy set-up.** One of my big mistakes back in 1985 was taking in my entire school show. It simply was not needed, and it was too big. Over that weekend, I created my "bag of magic" concept, which, in general, means the whole show goes into one bag or suitcase. Yes, I carry a table and a rabbit production, plus the live rabbit hidden in a carrier, but the main show is all in one case. I carry some posters for scenery and red tablecloths (actually king-size bed sheets from JC Penney) that I use to cover a table. I put two chairs and a suitcase on the table and

toss the second sheet over that for a background. I work in front of it. It's colorful and great for hiding the rabbit and other props. I no longer carry in the stage scenery that I use in school shows.

**Colorful posters help.** Remember that children like something to see before and during the show. That's why I carry a bag of colorful posters with me and stand them all round. They show me doing different magic things. Some are old posters, and some new. Lightweight and portable, they can be carried in one cloth bag.

**Use music, not the whole sound system.** The truth is that I now perform most preschool shows without a microphone. Those audiences range from fifty to a hundred fifty children on the floor, and I usually do not need a sound system. However, I always use music. For preschool shows, I carry a small portable CD player, often with a remote control, and play music with that. It's much easier than a big sound system with a microphone and iPod. I save that for the school shows of three hundred to a thousand students.

**Don't use scary or dangerous tricks.** Some of my favorite kid-show tricks are Disecto, Arrowhead, Spikes through Arm, Sword through Neck, Guillotine, and so forth, but I *never* use them at preschools! What part of *never* do you not understand? No, not ever. Little children do not understand that "it's

## HOW-TO

a trick” and “he’s only joking” when he pretends to cut off a hand. These tricks are real to preschoolers, and that means they are scary to them. They do not understand at ages three, four, or five that the danger is fake or imaginary. Please, don’t even consider doing such tricks! Save them for the older kids.

**Appear to make mistakes.** Children love to see magicians and clowns goof up, so you can make mistakes on purpose to make them laugh. Sometimes, goofs and mistakes can misdirect them from what you’re really going to do, and that’s fine, also. Go for it. If you have my book, *Kidbiz* (the grey hardback), read the chapter called “Magician in Trouble Syndrome.” Children love that!

**Act surprised along with the children.** When something happens that is funny or something goes wrong

(on purpose), act surprised with the children. Pretend you are not in control (even though you are), and the children will think that’s funny. Don’t worry if they laugh at you, especially if you are secretly making that happen.

### Use the “look, don’t see” technique.

I’ve called this technique by that name for forty years, but Malcom Yaffe in England has offered a new name for it, “They see, you don’t.” I like that, too. Children see something happen on stage, and when you look to see it, it doesn’t happen. A good example is when the cat pops up from behind the farmhouse in Supreme’s Farmyard Frolics trick. The kids point and shout, “There’s the cat!” You turn and look, secretly retracting the cat behind the house, and you don’t see him. Turn back to the kids and make the cat come up again, and they start telling you all over again. When you finally do

see the cat, the kids go bananas laughing and clapping because you (the silly magician) finally see what they saw all along. When I look, I don’t see; when I don’t look, they do, and they see. Use this at least once in every preschool show, but don’t overuse the technique. It works wonders.

Have fun while you are entertaining the children. How do you do that? Tune into the next issue for more about how to do that with preschool audiences. Hey, they’re really a lot of fun! Meanwhile, visit me online at [www.ginnmagic.com](http://www.ginnmagic.com), where you will find free books, free Good Reads, mini-magic classes, interesting magic videos by other performers, and links to two hundred YouTube videos. **TNC**

*David Ginn is the author of ninety-five books and instructional videos, including the mammoth Kidshow Magic Kompendium. Reach him by email at [ginnmagic@comcast.net](mailto:ginnmagic@comcast.net).*

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# Balloon Artwork

By Patricia Bunnell

**B**alloon twisters often ask me for information on how to draw artwork. This is my basic artwork, which includes eyes, noses, mouths, and a few extras to make your balloons go from ordinary to extraordinary!

I love to doodle when I'm on hold on the telephone or waiting somewhere. Sometimes I draw while watching TV.

These drawings depict my most basic artwork. I use it when I'm twisting at restaurants or doing line work. On occasion, when I have a short line, I add extra details like highlights in the eyes, to give the creation color in the iris, red lips or blush on the cheeks, face, and ears.

First thing I want to tell you is that I made these drawings using a program on my computer. Drawing them freehand, on a balloon gets very different results! The artwork on my balloons is far from perfect! I can't get everything the exact same size or height as hard as I try.

Instead of practicing these drawings on paper, I suggest that you use a 360 white or blush balloon.

When you get ready to take pictures of your work for your website, balloon forums, delivery pieces, etc., you will want the artwork to be polished and professional. I will describe a few ways to accomplish this.

I use 99% rubbing alcohol to remove permanent marker on the balloon if the artwork needs adjusting.

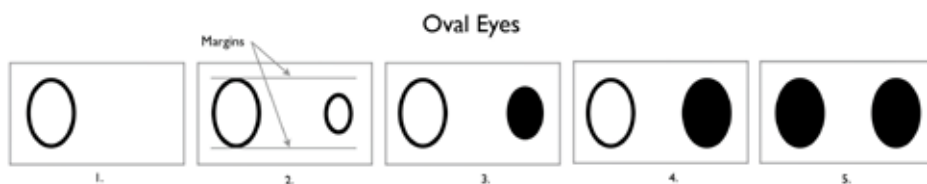
I use the cheapest powdered blush I can find for adding cheeks and color to my balloons. Try a dollar store. I prefer the color to be the darkest pink I can find (if you can find a red blush, great—but it may be hard to find or expensive). Strangely, blush will stain on a balloon, but eye shadow will not.

I get my inspiration for drawing from books, TV, and the Internet—but mostly from experimenting.

## Oval Eyes

Using a marker, start by making an oval.

Next to the oval make another one but smaller. Try to keep it within the same margins as the first.



Slowly fill in the smaller oval, making it larger. Constantly compare it to the first oval. Compare height, shape and size. It's easier to get them the same if you go slowly.

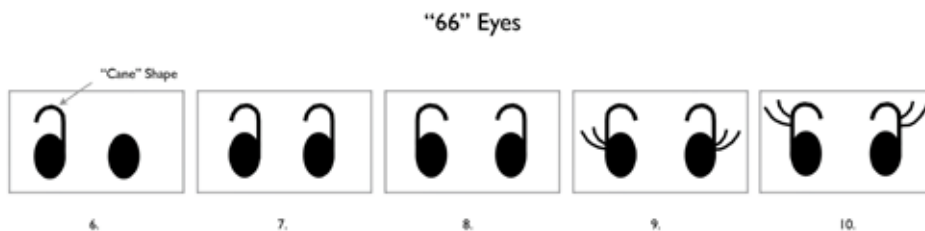
Stop when they are the same height, size, and shape.

Fill in the first oval, being careful to not go outside of the original margins. You should have two ovals fairly similar. (It's impossible to make them perfect.)

## "66" Eyes

"Cane" Shape

To add detail, draw two ovals that are the same size. Make an elongated arch that looks like a cane.



Arches that are drawn going the same direction make the eyes look left and right. In this example, the eyes are looking to your right).

When the arches are drawn going in opposite directions, the eyes appear to be looking straight ahead.

For female eyes, draw a couple of curved lines, one a little larger, to create eyelashes. Two eyelashes seems to be the perfect number, and it's fast.

Notice how the placement of the eyelashes gives the eyes a different expression.

## “22” Eyes

One day when I was making a pair of “66” eyes my marker missed the oval. It made a brand new eye shape that instantly became a favorite! Add eyebrows and/ or eyelashes.

### Pac Man Eyes

Starting at ten o'clock, draw an oval shape in a clockwise direction, but stop at nine o'clock. Draw a straight line from both nine and ten o'clock to the center of the oval.

Fill in the ovals leaving the wedge plain.

You can add the canes to the eyes if desired. Experiment and add eyelashes!

### Adding Light

Use a white paint marker to add dots inside the eyes. I prefer a brand called “Edding 750,” which can be bought online.

When adding the dots make sure that they are in the same place on both eyes. For example, if you put them at two o'clock on the left eye, make sure you do it at two o'clock on the right.

If you have time you can add color around the pupil; however, it is tricky. Practice makes perfect.

### Noses

I draw two types of noses. The first is an upside down “u.” It's cute for little boys or girls up to about twelve years old. After that I make an “L” shape—more angular for men and more rounded for women.

### Mouths

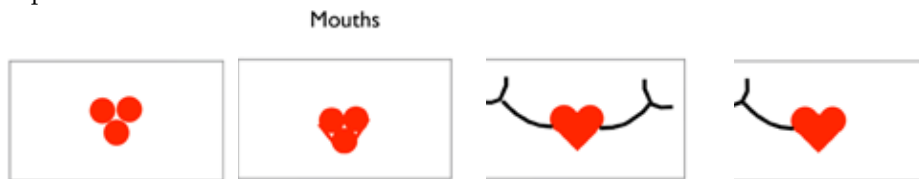
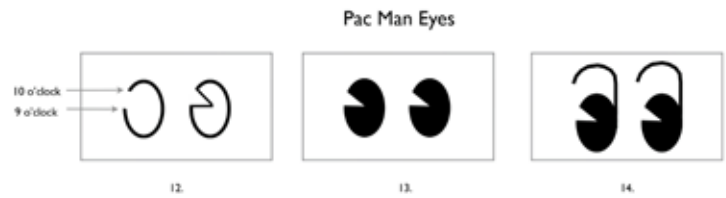
For girl mouths, draw three little circles with a red permanent marker.

Connect the dots on the two sides. Once you fill it in, it becomes a heart!

Draw a slightly curved line with a “u” shape on the top for both sides. If you do it on just one side, it changes from a smile to more of a smirk.

### Male Mouth

Drawing a mouth for a male is very simple. They are more angular when compared to a female mouth.



### Silly Mouth

Draw a half smile. Next draw a slanted “u” shape for the bottom of its mouth. Fill in the opening of its mouth with black—or you can draw a red tongue first and then fill above and around it with black.



Patricia “Pockets” Bunnell is an award-winning balloon artist from the Portland, Oregon, area. You may reach her by e-mail at [oddballoon@gmail.com](mailto:oddballoon@gmail.com).

# EIGHT SECRETS for Booking More Shows

By Tom Sikorski

If you have seen *The Music Man*, you know that there was a time when you could stroll into a small town, sell everyone band instruments and uniforms, and then catch the next train out of town. All this happened before anyone realized that you knew nothing about music. Not anymore. Today's consumer is very skeptical -- and with good reason. Now everyone is exposed to a constant parade of hype, hokum, and hogwash. I believe the biggest selling product in the world is false hope. Charlatans beware! Now your reputation can be checked on the Internet, and the public is getting better at finding out if you are a scam artist or the real deal.

Back in the 1970s, you could call a prospective customer and tell them a little bit about your show, and they were likely to ask how soon you could come. With corporate America demanding more and paying less, lots more people have gotten into the "entertainer for hire" business. At the same time, budgets are strained, and potential buyers are much more reluctant to open their wallets. Sadly, standards of ethics have also fallen. Consumers have been stung, bitten, and burned. I've been amazed at the stories I've heard. Directors have reported that performers have come into their day-care centers (even those that are church affiliated) and used "blue" humor, eaten fire, dressed like they slept in the gutter, and touched children "inappropriately." No wonder the people in charge are so determined to "protect their babies."

There is an old saying, "You build a reputation with hundreds of acts. You lose it with one." It amazes me that people in any business would actually think that they can take the easy way out and expect to have a future. It happens every day. Of course, this would be remedied if everyone just lived by the Golden Rule. Personally I don't think that is going to happen on this side of the grave. For those who do deliver a quality show at a fair price, this presents a problem. How do we provide wholesome, professional entertainment when potential clients are afraid to talk with us?

## Trust is earned—not owed

When I first started in magic, I read a book about doing children's shows. (I *was* a child at the time!) It pointed out that young kids may not have been taught to applaud when they enjoy a performance. The advice was, "Be grateful if you get it, but not disappointed if you don't." In the same way, although it would be nice if everyone gave us the benefit of the doubt, we should not expect it. So how can we earn trust before we are allowed to entertain for a particular group?

**1. Make promises and keep them.** This can be as simple as saying, "I will e-mail you a description of my program in the next ten minutes." Then do it.

**2. Use lots of testimonials.** People are naturally skeptical about us "tooting our own horn" because they know that we are just "trying to sell them something." When we can demonstrate that people outside of our family and friends (preferably leaders in the same industry as their own) had a positive experience working with us, they are much more likely to share the same confidence. Hand in glove with this is evidence that you perform regularly. The assumption is that if other people are booking you all the time, you must be good and honest.



## 3. Maintain a professional image.

For survival purposes, we are wired to judge a book by its cover. It is critically important that our promotional materials are first class. We cannot expect people who hire us to take us seriously if our brochure, flyer, and other advance representations are filled with misspellings, grammatical errors, repetition, and bad photography. If we do not personally have the talent and experience to do these things well, it is imperative that we hire people who are very good at them. Quality collateral does not have to be prohibitively expensive. There are many college students who are excellent at graphic design and copywriting who would be delighted to make a few dollars working on a real project.

Studio grade pictures can be made for a very reasonable investment in many Walmart stores. A beautiful Web site can be designed by anyone with modest computer skills at [www.Vistaprint.com](http://www.Vistaprint.com). There is a small monthly charge for hosting, as well as to remove their branding from your site. You can also upgrade to the capability of inserting YouTube videos and other enhancements. Nothing screams "beginner" louder than a bad template that is obviously from a free hosting service. Worse yet, some performers have banner ads for non-related products on display. If your site is "under construction," do NOT publish any pages to the Web until they are finished!

**4. Be aware of how you sound on the phone.** The best way to do this is to record your conversations and play them back to objectively evaluate how you are coming across to prospects. Almost thirty years ago, when I was first getting started performing in elementary schools, I was shocked when a former PTA president admitted why she did not allow me to perform at her school. Evidently, my voice sounded so high-pitched that she assumed I must be very young and therefore incapable of having the experience necessary to present a quality program. Being a “fast-talking city slicker” is a sure way to be avoided in small towns. It is normal for us to talk too rapidly when we are promoting our show because we are nervous that the other person may reject our proposal. Naturally, we are very enthusiastic because we love magic and know how much the audience will enjoy our program. However, being too excited will turn people off.

In order to be effective at finding good matches between an organization’s need and our solution, we have to train ourselves to be more conversational and less pushy. We have a tendency to say way too much, presuming that what we do is a good fit for anything (“magic for all occasions”). It is then that it would be good to remember that “Prescription, before diagnosis, is malpractice.”

Our telephone conversations must be scripted and choreographed as carefully as any theatrical performance. In order to learn this, we need to have “cue cards” to keep us on track until we have perfected our presentation. We should never interrupt, gently ask a lot of questions, listen to the answers, and pause frequently so our communication partner will have the opportunity to contribute. Unfortunately, if we were animals, we would be a yaks! As sales trainer Brian Tracy points out, “Selling isn’t telling.” The best teaching I have ever seen for how to do this right for maximum results is Matt Fore’s *Strategic Marketing for Magicians* course ([Matt@MattFore.com](mailto:Matt@MattFore.com)).

**5. Produce a showcase video.** Although many people will tell you they

need to see you somewhere else first, it is very rare that this will actually happen. Auditioning for a prospect doesn’t work because a big part of the experience we provide is the interaction with a full audience. The next best thing to being there is a short movie. Recently, high-resolution video cameras have become very affordable. Even better is the broadcast-quality equipment found at many churches, schools, and community-access TV stations. With some bartering and networking, it is very possible to arrange the creation of a superb-quality introduction to your work for little or no cost. This will provide a steady picture, clear sound, adequate lighting, a sharp image, and perhaps even the assistance of someone who is an expert at video editing and enhancement.

**6. Dress the part.** How would you feel if your airline pilot, doctor, or attorney met you wearing a T-shirt, gym shorts, and flip-flops? What if their briefcase was beat up, their papers were wrinkled, and they were sporting a cartoon character tattoo? My guess is you would probably not evaluate them as very competent in their field. Although this is illogical, again it is part of our survival instinct to make snap judgments about what we can expect from someone based upon how they look. Most people have an image in their mind that a “magician” wears a top hat and tails. Although this is not practical or necessary for most situations (especially outdoors), it is still very important to dress “above” the audience in a way that sets you apart as the authority who will be leading the event.

We are, after all, in show business. Is it plausible to expect the public to believe that we have the ability to bend the laws of science in order to achieve desired effects and yet are unable to leave our house early enough to set up the show before the audience arrives?

As magicians, we have chosen to operate in the realm of unlimited possibilities, fantasy, and make-believe. Should we not also be able to amaze people with our intelligence, knowledge, manners, kindness, friendliness, health,

and energy? We may not all be able to achieve the success of John Calvert, but we should never stop trying to reach our own potential.

**7. Speak their language.** I once called a new competitor in the area to find out what they were offering in the market. When I asked him what he did, the answer was “standard magic.” Sarcastically, I thought to myself, “I am so glad they wouldn’t do anything unique or custom made for me.” How would anyone who is not a magician know what “standard” is? When we refer to silks and zig-zags, lay people have no idea what we are talking about. On the other hand, by using the prospect’s industry lingo, you help them think, “He is one of us; he knows and understands me and my business.” An example of this would be referring to elementary-age kids at Primrose Schools as “Explorers.”

**8. Have an empathetic attitude.** Perhaps the most important element of building trust with people who can connect us with an audience is making it clear that they are heard and understood. Remember that people don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care. Cavett Robert, the late founder of the National Speakers Association, put it this way, “Your success begins when you start walking out on stage thinking, ‘There you are,’ rather than ‘Here I am.’” Our prospective customers must know that we have their best interests in mind, not that we need a show. Yes, this is counter-intuitive, but it is the secret behind why some performers keep working for happy leaders and others wonder why representatives of groups who could hire them are not interested. **TNC**

*Tom Sikorski has been performing magic shows for forty-five years. He entertained for five seasons at Six Flags over Georgia, over two years at Walt Disney World, and did a sixty-show tour in Europe. His primary markets have included theme parks, elementary schools, and birthday parties, as well as day care and senior centers. He welcomes your feedback at [tomsikorski7@gmail.com](mailto:tomsikorski7@gmail.com).*

# THE LAST WALK-AROUND

## Bev “Rebo” Bergeron

Bev Bergeron, 89, of Orlando, Florida, died December 3, 2020. Beginning in the early 1960s, Bev achieved national fame as Rebo the Clown on the popular TV show, *The Magic Land of Allakazam*. He also served as International President of the International Brotherhood of Magicians in 1996–1997. Bev grew up in Baytown, Texas, where he saw the *Willard the Wizard* tent show when he was ten. By the time he was fourteen, Bev was working as a professional magician at birthday parties and local events. At seventeen, he joined the Willard show before beginning college at the University of Texas. His studies were interrupted by the Korean War, during which he served with the Air Force. He received a promotion to Special Services and performed in and produced hundreds of shows for the troops.

Magic helped Bev earn enough money to return to the University of Texas, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in



business and advertising. He performed campus shows with students and future stars, including Fess Parker, L.Q. Jones, Jane Mansfield, Rip Torn, Harvey Schmidt, and Tom Jones. Bev used his marketing skills to help launch Hickory Farms of Ohio.

With money he made from this venture, in 1960 he partnered with Mark Wilson and his assistant and wife, Nani Darnell, for the children’s TV show, *The Magic Land of Allakazam*. Bev played Rebo the Clown and was responsible for creating and directing many of the illusions on the shows. His credits as an actor also include *McDonaldland*, *Funny Face Drink Mix Magic Show*, and *Pillsbury’s Magic Circus*. In addition, he performed with and provided material for Red Skelton, Lucille Ball, Johnny Carson, Bob Hope, and Merv Griffin, among many others.

Bev spent sixteen years performing five shows a day at Walt Disney World’s *Diamond Horseshoe Revue* and an additional four years at SeaWorld. He performed in all the top venues, including Las Vegas, Reno, Atlantic City, and Radio City Music Hall, and at scores of state fairs, conventions, and trade shows.

He is the author of three books, *Willard the Wizard*, *The Magic Connection*, and *Tony Marks: Aristocrat of Deception*, and wrote extensive material for magicians around the world. He also produced videos, including *Rebo Nose Clowning*, *Bev Bergeron on Tape*, *Bev Bergeron: Comedy and Clowning*, *The Magic of Bev Bergeron*,



and appeared in a retrospective of Disney’s *Diamond Horseshoe Revue*.

He was the creator of many magic effects and illusions, including the Multiplying Magic Wands, Utility Hat, and the Silk Gun. He created the concept of the one-balloon dog in 1957. He was elected as a member of the Society of Magicians Hall of Fame in 1992. In 1998, Bev received the Lifetime Achievement Fellowship Award from the Academy of Magical Arts in Hollywood, California. He was a founding member of the Magic Castle and held member number 10. At the 1994 I.B.M. Convention in Orlando, the entire cast brought to the stage a special production of *The Magic Land of Allakazam*, and in 2018, they were honored at the S.A.M. Convention. In addition, Bev is a member of the Disney Hall of Fame, 1996 honoree of the Magic Collectors’ Association, and the recipient of the Jimmy Durante Comedy Award.

Bev was a kind and generous man and will be remembered as a performer, teacher of magic, and inventor of magic effects. Bev was married to his wife, Alouise, for fifty-eight years, and she passed away seven weeks after him on January 16, 2021. His survivors include three children: Bambi (Michael) Hobgood, Carmel (Juergen) Bohlen, Beau (Pamela) Bergeron; six grandchildren: Kristin, James, Jason, Shawn, Katelin, and Nicole; and two great-grandchildren: Ethan and Steven.

## Richard “RC” Cain

Richard Cain passed away on January 1, 2021. An award-winning hobo clown from Atlanta, Georgia, RC was a long-time performer who was active in several clown arts membership organizations. He held the International Shrine Clown Association closest to his heart. Working his way up the line, he was the ISCA President in 2002. He will be remembered as a true gentleman of the art of clowning. RC was a positive influence on every clown he ever met.

Even though Fud-di-Duddy worked with RC on different organizational projects starting in 1998, they got to know each other over the phone and finally met at the Northeast Clown Institute where they were both instructors, judges, and members of the board. RC was a long-time active member of the Yaarab Shrine Red Devil Clown Unit. Besides his continual service to ISCA, he was also actively involved in the Southeastern Shrine Clown Association and local clown alleys in the Atlanta area. He is fondly remembered as a great clown and Shriner, as well. He had friends around the world, and he loved each as a brother. We know that when he entered the Center Ring and the spotlight shined upon him, he was given an immediate standing ovation. Take your bow, RC. You truly deserve it.



communications. He also served as a volunteer fireman with the Murrayville Fire Department where he held the role of treasurer for more than thirty years. In his free time, Jim enjoyed woodworking, attending auctions, restoring wooden wall telephones, and spending time with his grandchildren.

Jim was a charter member of the COAI "Lincoln Laffers" Clown Alley which was organized in 1992. He held the offices of President and Treasurer many times. He helped organize and put on many children's clown clinics over the years, participated along with other alley members in the State Fair and many other parades, along with donating his time at various fundraisers. Jim loved bringing joy and laughter to children as Fiddlestix the Clown.

Jim was preceded in death by his parents, sister Judy Kremer, sister Joann Harpole and his brother Bobbie Capps. He is survived by his wife Delpha, his sons David (spouse Mariam), Mike (spouse Becky) and three grandchildren: Emily, Sam and Cedric.

## James "Fiddlestix" Capps

Jim D. Capps, 80, of Murrayville, Illinois, passed away at his home on the morning of December 11, 2020. He was the son of Everette "Bill" and Myotta (Guthrie) Capps of Pleasant Hill, Illinois. After graduating from Pleasant Hill High School in 1957 where he played on the basketball team, Jim volunteered and served as a radio communications and missile maintenance specialist for three years with the US Army. Upon return to civilian life, he married Delpha Ford of Nebo, Illinois in 1962. He worked thirty-seven years for GTE/Verizon as a switching technician where he helped the company to transition from analog to digital



## Charles "Tuna" Rieder

Charlie Rieder, 83, passed away November 25, 2020. Charlie was a devoted family man who was a loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, uncle, cousin, and friend. A long-time Shrine Clown called "Tuna," he was known across the country and admired in the hearts of children everywhere. A loved and respected member of the St Louis clown community, Tuna was one of those guys who was sometimes called a "clown's clown." Tuna loved the Shrine Circus and traveled far and wide to perform with and support Shrine Centers and Clown Units who were hosting



Shrine Circuses. Tuna attended many clown conventions and presented workshops on his favorite clown subjects, walk-around, meet and greets, and physical comedy. When in the company of those attending a convention, he considered one and all his dearest friends. Tuna was a master of physical clown comedy and was often seen doing trips, prat falls, and other physical comedy routines for the kids at Busch Stadium, among many other venues, while they were waiting with their families to get into the circus. Charlie was buried with full military honors. We are sure that when Tuna entered Heaven's center ring, he skipped in, tripped over his own feet, fell flat on his face, and had the crowd in an uproar of laughter and applause. The laughter he created here on earth is missed already.

## Don "Toot" Tootle

Donald O. Tootle passed away December 28, 2020, from complications from Covid-19. His great friend, Noble Michael Clark, an ISCA Clown of the Year, commented, "With a deeply saddened heart, I must say that one of the Great Aladdin Shrine Clowns (Grove City, OH), Don "Toots" Tootles, passed away today, at 83. He was past Director of the Clown Unit, Clown Ambassador, Member of ISCA and GLSCUA, and a member of the Royal Jesters. Don was a very talented and laid-back kind of guy and had a heart of pure gold! He was influential in developing skits, makeup, props, a master of clown performance, as well as a great speaker. Don was an Aladdin Clown for almost forty years. Toots will definitely be missed! Be at peace, Don." Don was a master at walk-around and paradability, always leaving everyone with whom he interacted smiling, giggling, or laughing out loud. He was a performer who presented comedy sight gags like no one else. Also a member of



COAI, WCA, and the Midwest Clown Association, he provided inspired leadership whenever called upon. Born in Frankfort, Ohio, he graduated from Ohio State University, obtaining degrees in physical therapy and health care administration. When he retired in 2001, he was the Administrative Director of Rehab Services at Riverside Methodist Hospital. He and his wife Barbara were married for fifty-one years. Not only a great clown, he dressed out as Santa every Christmas for over forty years and visited the newborns and their moms at his hospital. Don served his brothers in the fraternity he loved with his whole heart. He shared his love of clowning with one and all and was inspirational in all he did. He was an impressive performer and a passionate brother. He is missed. He is survived by his children, Timothy (Janice), Thomas, and Tammi; and grandsons, Joseph and Jacob.

## Larry “Slow Poke” Tucker

Larry Tucker, 77, passed away on Christmas Day, 2020. He was sometimes known as the husband of WCA’s Alley Director, Janet Tucker. He and Janet were married for fifty-three years. Clowning around from Hammond, Indiana, Larry was not only a member of a few local clown alleys, he was a member of WCA, COAI, the Midwest Clown Association, and the Fellowship of Christian Magicians. When he wasn’t clowning around, he was active in the NRA and served as a state committeeman. Larry started his working life in the US Army, and upon his honorable discharge, he worked for the Ford Motor Company for almost forty years, retiring in 2000. He was a devoted family man. His favorite audiences were always his family members. We are sure that when he entered the Center Ring, he was greeted by many friends. He and the laughter he created are missed.



## Mark Wilson

James Mark Wilson, 91, of Santa Clarita, California, died January 19, 2021. Mark was born in New York City and raised during the Great Depression and World War II. He spent his life sharing his passion for making people happy through the art of magic by blazing new paths to reach audiences around the world. Through Mark’s 1960s national television show, *The Magic Land of Allakazam*, the beloved Rebo the Clown (Bev Bergeron) appeared weekly for a national audience.



Mark’s interest in magic began when he was eight years old and saw a magician named Tommy Martin perform at a hotel in Indianapolis, where the Wilson family were staying at the time. As a teenager, Wilson improved his magic knowledge by working for the Douglas Magicland shop in Dallas, Texas, as a clerk. As his skills improved, he began performing magic shows at small functions. Mark attended the School of Business Administration at Southern Methodist University, where he majored in marketing, learning skills that helped him in his future career.

When television began to grow, Wilson launched a show titled *Time for Magic* on a local station in Dallas in 1955. Calling on his marketing training, he made this show possible by attracting sponsorship from the Dr. Pepper Bottling Company. He expanded to other shows in Houston and San Antonio. When videotape was developed, Wilson created the first show to be videotaped and nationally syndicated, the original black-and-white *The Magic Land of Allakazam*. It debuted on October 1, 1960 on CBS-TV and aired every Saturday morning on that network for four years. His wife, Nani Darnell, assisted him. They were joined by Bev Bergeron, who helped write the shows and played the character “Rebo the Clown.” The show was sponsored

by Kellogg’s. Wilson, Darnell, and Bergeron toured state fairs during the summer and made appearances on other network shows. This show’s team was the nucleus that brought a new look to magic illusions that are still being used today. *The Magic Land of Allakazam* moved from CBS-TV to ABC-TV in 1962 without missing one week on air. In 1965, *Magic Land of Allakazam* left ABC and was internationally syndicated.

Wilson later created *The Funny Face Magic Show* and the Pillsbury-sponsored *Magic Circus* in 1971. He also provided the Hall of Magic at the 1964–1965 World’s Fair in New York and appeared on film at the Bell Telephone exhibit at the 1968 Hemisfair. He and his crew assisted in the technical production of the magic in many network shows, including *The Magician*, *Circus of the Stars*, *Hollywood Palace*, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *The Incredible Hulk*, and *Columbo*.

Wilson’s last regular television stint was *The Magic of Mark Wilson*. The series was seen in national syndication in 1981, and Wilson was aided on this final series by his son, Greg, as well as his longtime assistant, Nani. Mark and Nani made an appearance in 2015 in the second series of *Penn & Teller: Fool Us*, when they were part of the reveal of Greg Wilson’s act.

Mark’s trademark phrase, “Happy Magic,” was his and Nani’s sign-off words for countless live and television performances. Mark’s creativity, originality, and leadership were based on respect and honor for others. *MAGIC Magazine* named Mark “one of the Ten Most Influential American Magicians of the Twentieth Century.” Mark is known for his years on the television series, *The Magic Land of Allakazam*, his live performances, and his books, including *The Mark Wilson Complete Course in Magic*, which was published in 1974.

Survivors include his wife and performing partner, Nani, and sons, Mike and Greg. **TNC**

# HARRY'S HILARITIES

## Tricks of the Trade

**Mindreading:** When your palm itches, it means you're going to get something. When your head itches, it means you've got it.

**Mouth Coil:** The hard part is putting it back in!

**Balloon Gag:** Do my balloons break often? No, only once!

**Fire Magic:** I read about the dangers of fire magic, so I gave up reading.

**Borrowing a Coin:** What a shiny coin—that's a good reflection on you.

**Suspension Trick:** This is known as the Law of Gravity. They laughed at Galileo when he said that. Oh, wait a sec...Newton said that. No wonder they laughed at Galileo!

**Wave Your Hand Over a Prop:** I do all of my own choreography.

**Comedy Production:** Produce a bar of Dove soap instead of a live dove.

**Egg Trick:** I have here a golden egg. Haven't you ever heard of white gold?

**Money Tricks:** I don't lend money. It causes amnesia.

I have here a twenty-dollar William. I haven't known it long enough to call it Bill.

Every other show I hand out a ten-dollar bill. This is the other show.



*Harry Allen is the co-owner, with Irv Cook, of Daytona Magic in Daytona Beach, Florida. Harry tours extensively with his dealer show, demonstrating the latest in magic supplies, combined with his quick-witted delivery. Visit him online at [www.daytonamagic.com](http://www.daytonamagic.com).*

# LOOP THE LOOP: *Magic in a Moment!*

By Tim "Sawdust" Laynor

Photos by Ann "Tuttles" Sanders

**L**oop the Loop is a clever puzzle with a solution that is perplexing and entertaining.

**PROPS:** You will need a pot-holder craft loop, rubber band, or cord tied in a loop and a ring (Fig. 1)

**SET-UP:** Thread the loop through the ring (Fig. 2). Place one end of the loop on the thumb and the other on the index finger. For smaller hands, you can have the audience member make a fist, put her hands side by side, and use her index fingers (Fig. 3).

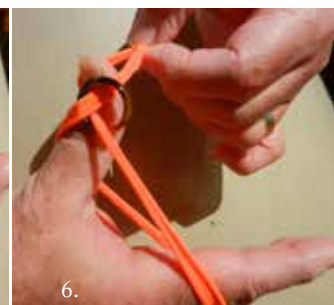
**CHALLENGE:** Remove the ring without removing the loops from the finger and thumb.

**SECRET:** Take a section of the cord and make another loop over the finger on the side of the ring (Fig. 4). For the trick to work, you must put the second loop below the first loop.

Take the original (top) loop and carefully lift it above and off the finger. Let go of the loop, tighten the cord, and the ring will drop off while the string is still on the fingers (Figs. 5-7).

**NOTE:** I prefer to use craft loops when issuing this challenge. They are inexpensive colorful bands that you can wear on your wrist. You can present the bands, let your assistant make a selection, and once the trick has been completed, she can keep the loop. I bet she will continue the fun by performing the trick for her friends! **TNC**

*Two photos magically disappeared from this article in the last issue. We apologize for the omission and are running it with the additional photos.*



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# CLOWN COMICS

INSPIRATION AND HUMOR

## BIRTHDAY SURPRISE

By Ann "Tuttles" Sanders

★ Starring: Jerry "Dr. Dufus" Dodson and Tim "Sawdust" Laynor  
Members of Kolonial Klowns of Williamsburg – Alley #357

Photos by Harold "Ducky" Wood



# YOUR GUIDE TO QUALITY KID-SHOWS

Sammy Smith is one of the great leaders in the field of kid show magic. He understands children's magic, and he's a great innovator. His dry wit always makes me laugh!"

—Silly Billy, professional clown, New York City

"I have used so much great material from this book, I almost feel like I should pay Sammy again for it!"

—Mark Daniel, cofounder of KIDabra International

"Sammy Smith is a master of total audience involvement. These routines are pure gold for me...even after 25 years of doing shows. A marvelous book."

—Dave Mayer, professional children's entertainer, Chicago, Illinois

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