

THE NEW CALLIÖPE

For Members of Clowns of America International

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COAI PRESIDENT
2020–2022

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MEET

ADAM SCHILL

COAI PRESIDENT

2020-2022



Adam's look from about 2008–2011. PHOTO BY ALEX ZAPRUDSKY

By Rose Cardenas

As COAI's youngest-ever president, Adam Schill has come into office looking toward the future of clowning. He's focused on growing membership, balancing the books, expanding benefits to current members, and attracting a young generation of entertainers who will impact the world in new ways.

Adam began his career in clowning at age eleven when he joined Smiles Unlimited Clown Ministry, founded by Don "Ski" Berkoski, who was also a former COAI President. Even though the age minimum was thirteen, the group made an exception for Adam. His father had to accompany Adam as a chaperone for the ten-week course. After the first week—seeing how much fun it was—Adam's father also enrolled and became a clown. He and Adam clowned together for many years.

Adam never needed a "normal" teenage job during his high school and college years. Instead, he performed as a clown at birthday parties and twisted balloons. When he was in his early twenties, he began learning circus skills and auditioned with Ringling Brothers a couple of times. Shortly after his second audition, he met his wife and began concentrating on hometown clowning, specifically with his balloon twisting talents. He performed on and off during the following years but focused mainly on starting his family and career in real estate. Adam says with a grin, "I knew I had to find a professional job because I was too lazy for factory work." Even as he headed in a different direction in his career, he found that his clowning skills aided him in real estate. He understands and enjoys working with people on a personal basis. He also enjoys the flexibility of real estate, which has allowed him to keep up his clowning by performing when he wants.

Adam is based in Columbus, Indiana, a town located halfway between Indianapolis, Indiana, and Louisville, Kentucky. He and his wife Lorraine have been married since 2013 and have two sons, Emmett, who is six, and Eli, who will soon be one. Both his sons' names were derived from clown history with Emmett named after Emmett Kelly and Eli Jacob for Lou Jacobs. Adam says, "Emmett is the goofy one who has an interest in clowning and performing. Eli seems like he will be more reserved." Adam enjoys sharing clown arts with his family. His father continues to clown, his wife is learning face painting, and Adam looks forward to Emmett performing, as well.

A few years ago, Adam tried to make clown entertainment his full-time career. However, he found that having to meet his financial needs took the fun away. In addition, the timing was not ideal as this was in the middle of the "scary clown" phenomena, and he felt like he was swimming upstream. He knew burnout was on

the horizon, and he quickly scaled back and returned to real estate. Now, Adam chooses his clowning jobs more carefully, using higher priced fees to get the more exclusive jobs that he prefers.

Balloon twisting is Adam's specialty, and he performs both in and out of his clown costume. He does corporate picnics, festivals, and many church shows. His clown heart is expressed once a month in the kids' service that he co-hosts at his church. Though the service is scripted, Adam finds much room for adlibbing and comedy. He loves being a part of this program.

In addition to his clown performances, Adam enjoys transforming into Santa Claus each year. He has been performing this holiday role every November and December since he was twelve or thirteen years old and began doing it professionally about five years ago. Little by little, he has invested in developing a high-end look. Adam says many clowns perform as Santa, with at least three on the current board, and there is much carryover in the skills. "Working as Santa involves making connections and touching hearts, just as clowns do," he points out.

Along with balloons and magic, Adam dabbled in sideshow stunts, but he abandoned those in favor of safer material upon getting married. Videos of his earlier stunts remained online and continued



Clockwise from top left: Adam holds son Emmett before heading out the door to a gig. Adam, at about twelve years old, meets Emmett Kelly, Jr. at a statue signing. Adam with his wife Lorraine and son Emmett before heading to Emmett's daycare Halloween party.



Above: Adam twists balloons at a birthday party. Adam performs a magic show at a preschool carnival.

to attract attention. In July 2013, a production assistant from *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* called. He had run across a YouTube video of Adam eating a light bulb. They had a spot available in a segment called "Meal or No Meal," which was similar to Letterman's "Stupid Human Tricks" in which an "audience member" does unusual things and competes for a free meal at a nice restaurant in front of a panel of celebrity judges. After researching and determining that it was indeed a legitimate offer, Adam accepted and flew to Los Angeles. He performed on national television in front of millions of people and several celebrity guests, and got to hang out backstage at NBC studios. Adam keeps the video on his phone and says he is happy to show it off. So, if you are ever curious, just ask!

Adam's education in clowning has included attending the Mooseburger Clown Arts Camp, as well as many workshops and conventions. He joined COAI when he was a preteen and was just beginning to learn his skills. He grew up reading *The New Calliope* and, after all those years seeing what he felt were clown celebrities in the magazine, greatly enjoyed meeting them at his first COAI Convention in Clarksville, Indiana, in 2009. He has also been involved with the Clown Forum for many years and has made many friends among the participants.

Ten years ago, Adam became an ambassador for COAI under Dan Langwell, then the Midwest Regional Vice President. Adam has served as the Education Director for the COAI for



Top left: Adam and his father David practice auguste makeup during their ten-week clown class. **Left:** Adam and his father David after “Auguste Night” of their clown class. **Above, left to right:** Adam and a nine-foot tall toy soldier balloon décor piece. Adam as “Knut” in his current full auguste look. **Bottom left:** Adam and his father as “Knut and Mulligan.”

the past two years. He felt the need to become involved as he saw others retiring from the board. He intended to become the Midwest Regional Vice President, but someone suggested that he run for the Education Director, instead. He is a major proponent of education, inspired by the quote, “If you are green, you are growing, but if you are ripe, you are rotting.”

Adam enjoys promoting the business aspects of clowning in addition to its entertainment value. He has known some of the newer board members from his involvement with the Clown Forum and some of the older ones from seeing them in *The New Calliope* and meeting them



at conventions. He helped create educational goals for COAI and enjoyed being a part of the board.

When it came time to elect a new president, he threw his name in, and his election was uncontested. Two or three others had mentioned running, and Adam knows they also would have done a great job in the role. He says, “They were all very supportive of me running.” With this election, Adam becomes COAI’s youngest president at age thirty-one.

Adam faces many challenges as he looks forward to advancing COAI during his term. The demographics of the organization show that many members are getting older and retiring from their careers in clowning. Others are not renewing their memberships because they can’t afford it or can’t perform any longer.

Many changes have occurred in clowning over the past twenty years and since Adam began his clowning career. When he went to his first convention, hundreds of clowns were in attendance. Conventions and clown competitions are not attracting the numbers of

former years. Styles in clowning have also changed. Clowns used to perform exclusively in the traditional clown look with full makeup and costume with gloves and shoes. When he was starting out, he often went to events with his alley, and all the clowns were in full costume in ninety-degree heat. Now,



Adam in the first incarnation of his lite auguste look. PHOTO BY ALEX ZAPRUDSKY



Top left: Adam and Lorraine with Jay Leno after Adam's performance on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* in July 2013. **Top center:** Adam during "Hobo/Tramp Night" in his ten-week clown class. **Top right:** Adam in Hobo makeup with Red Skelton impersonator Brian Hoffman at the Red Skelton Festival Parade in Vincennes, Indiana, in 2010. **Lower left:** Adam talks with a child while performing as Santa. **Lower right:** Adam's first Auguste look at age eleven in 2001, around the time he graduated from his first clown class.

clowning tends to be more practical. The lite auguste look was almost unknown twenty years ago but is now quite popular. Adam often performs dressed in a short-sleeved shirt.

The negative publicity of recent years about the fear of clowns has also impacted the world of clowning. Adam feels that most of this is based on hype and that media portrayals of this issue are annoying. In his perspective, few people are actually afraid of clowns. Some children are not afraid themselves but are responding to their parents' attitudes. Being a large man himself, Adam feels that, if children were indeed afraid of clowns, they would be afraid of him, but he hasn't found that to be the case.

Among the goals of his presidency is attracting a younger membership. Adam realizes that, to attract that younger demographic, the organization must provide value to them. Millennials and Gen

Zers aren't as interested in joining clubs and organizations as older generations have been. Adam says, "We must ask ourselves what we can do to attract that demographic." The last few conventions have been a bit better, but more ideas are needed.

With the decrease in membership comes the difficulty of remaining solvent as an organization. Adam would like to increase value to COAI members, especially those of the younger generation, without raising the dues and burdening members. The key is growing membership as a whole. Adam intends to search out more niche performers, those who don't necessarily fit the typical clown personae or perform at the typical venues of birthday parties, churches, and nursing homes. He says, "COAI needs to reach out to them." He wants to create a change in perception and generate interest in the organization from

variety entertainers who are not strictly clowns, such as burlesque and nightclub performers. In addition, Adam wants to increase the online presence for COAI, specifically by increasing SEO (search engine optimization) reach and social media platforms. He says, "We must go where the people are and not expect them to come to us." Adam looks forward to working with the new board to accomplish these objectives.

The current Covid-19 crisis has shown the need of clowning in the world. Adam says, "People are hurting, and clowns can make a comeback by providing relief and help. I'm inspired by those who have adapted their shows to online formats." Library and school shows have stripped away many of the extras and are now rebounding. He continues, "There is always room in the world for clowns. People need clowns, and the world would be a sad and lonely place without us." **TNC**



From the President

Adam Schill

Hey, all you cool cats and kittens! If you're reading this, apparently I got the one vote needed to become your next COAI President! (I was uncontested.) I am super excited to serve you for the next two years and hopefully beyond, as we move COAI into a period of growth and prosperity. We have some exciting plans, and we can't wait to share them with you! We'll share more info as those ideas are polished and refined.

A bit about me, in case we don't know each other yet. I am thirty-one years old. I have been married to my wife, Lorraine, since 2013. We have two sons—Emmett who is six (yes, his name came from where you think it did) and Eli who will be one at the end of August.

I have been clowning since 2001 when I was eleven years old. I started clowning with Smiles Unlimited Universal Clown Ministry in Indiana, which was founded by former COAI President Don "Ski" Berkoski (1990–1992). I clowning all through my teenage years. In my early twenties, I began pursuing circus life and auditioned a couple of times for Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey, to no avail. At around that time I also met my wife. Since she had no desire to live in a six-by-six room on a train, I decided to stop pursuing the circus and move my focus to hometown clowning. I started focusing on birthday and corporate work, as well as developing my balloon twisting skills, which is what I primarily do now.

I look forward to helping COAI continue to grow our membership with new audiences that we have not previously been able to reach. I'm a natural networker and people person, and I have made friends across a wide swath of the variety entertainment industry. I would love to incorporate ways to get them into COAI, as well as look for ideas that make things work in their industries and incorporate them into our organization. I want to streamline things and make us more attractive to new demographics. If you have ideas on how we can grow COAI or make it better, feel free to reach out! We love input!. **TNC**

LEARN HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN FOAM PROPS!

SEARCH THE ARCHIVES OF THE NEW CALLOIPE
1990 SEP/OCT ISSUE



THE VAULT IS A FREE MEMBER PERK

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Have you taken a dive into **THE VAULT** yet?

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All COAI members may now access free books on the COAI website at www.mycoai.com. The growing library is a companion to The Vault, which hosts thirty-seven years of *The New Calliope*. In the "Free Books" section, members can now read such titles as COAI's *Clowning Basics*, David Ginn's *Starting in Magic* and *Keep It a Secret*, Leslie Ann Akin's *Adventures in Clowning*, and Samuel Patrick Smith's *Big Laughs for Little People*. Additional titles will be added throughout the year. These books have a retail value of more than twice a COAI annual membership. Please note that these are not available as downloads but may be read online using your computer, smartphone, or tablet.





COAI's Online Alley, Alley #1000, is an Alley open to all members of COAI. The Alley was started to connect those who don't have an Alley so we can gather and share, grow, and socialize with other entertainers. The best part is you can live anywhere and be a member! We have members from all over the USA, as well as some from Canada and those who are interested from overseas.

We meet the second Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m., ET. I record every meeting and post them on Giggle Bytes Private Facebook page, so you can participate even if this time doesn't work for you. This Facebook page is only for members who have paid their dues to the Alley. The cost is fifteen dollars a year and gets you access to every meeting we have had. If you'd like to check it out as a guest, just contact me on Facebook or e-mail me at halaloo2000@yahoo.ca and take a test drive.

I record the formal part of the meeting, but when we stick around and chat over coffee, a wealth of information is exchanged. Everyone should attend the

live meeting to experience all the benefits. Even though I take notes, I do not share those with everyone! I feel those that attend deserve a perk or two, and guests do not have access to the recordings.

We have guests who speak on many subjects of interest to entertainers, including balloons, face painting, puppets, hospital clowning, and clown ministry. During July and August, we will focus on face painting. Our August meeting will include balloons with a workshop from a special guest. I am planning a session of magic for September. During October or November meeting, we will be discussing how to best use social networking to increase our online presence.

Some of the guests we have had are Captain Visual, Patricia Bunnell, Lee Andrews, Andrew Davis, Halaloo, Jessica King, Kornpop, Jed Crouse, Dana Barnum, Randy Christiansen, and so many more. I am always looking for new guests, so if you have something that you can share with other entertainers, please contact me.

Some have asked if a physical Alley could join the Online Alley's meeting. Yes! We would love that! Buffalo Alley has done this already.

There you have it, a bit of an overview on Giggle Bytes. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. I look forward to seeing more COAI members at our Alley meetings!

Until next time, be the best you can be!

Halaloo!

(Hal Grant) halaloo2000@yahoo.ca

Welcome, NEW MEMBERS!

Trent "Jesteria" Adams NY	Rachel "Starburst" Cochenour PA	Roger "Cleo" Ragan AL
Helen "Dona Florinda" Boyle-Wheeler GA	Jacob "Jukebox" Cochenour PA	Christopher "Genesisus Willikers" Robinson OK
Victoria "FunnyFace" Boyle-Wheeler GA	Carmen "Carmelita" Cosme PR	Jozef Andrzej Sobiech MA
William "Guy" Boyle-Wheeler GA	Paige and Drew Dorrance Family CA	Maddison Daisy Sobiech MA
Danita "Roxy" Britton CA	Aaron & Yvonne Gillespie Ireland	Allison Lily Sobiech MA
Theresa "Doodles" Burns FL	Charlotte "Ima Tri N" Hahn ID	Addison Rose Sobiech MA
Craig "Crickett" Calame TX	Cynthia "Buttercup the Magic Clown" May MI	Violetta "Pinkee" Sobiech MA
Anne and Vin Chan Family CA	Phil "Otto" Nichols TX	Faye Watt Canada
Bruce "Dr. Quak en Bush" Chodosh SC	Jill "Jellybeanz" Plummer ID	Kathleen Watt Canada
Jonathan Cochenour PA	Raymond "Wipi" Quinones PR	Jen and Ben Weinstein Family CA
		Lauren "Mushee" Williams CO
		Cora "Amorum Infandum" Yoder PA

THE UNSTOPPABLE

Dr. Nicholas “Doc” Reed



PHOTO BY MERILYN BARRETT

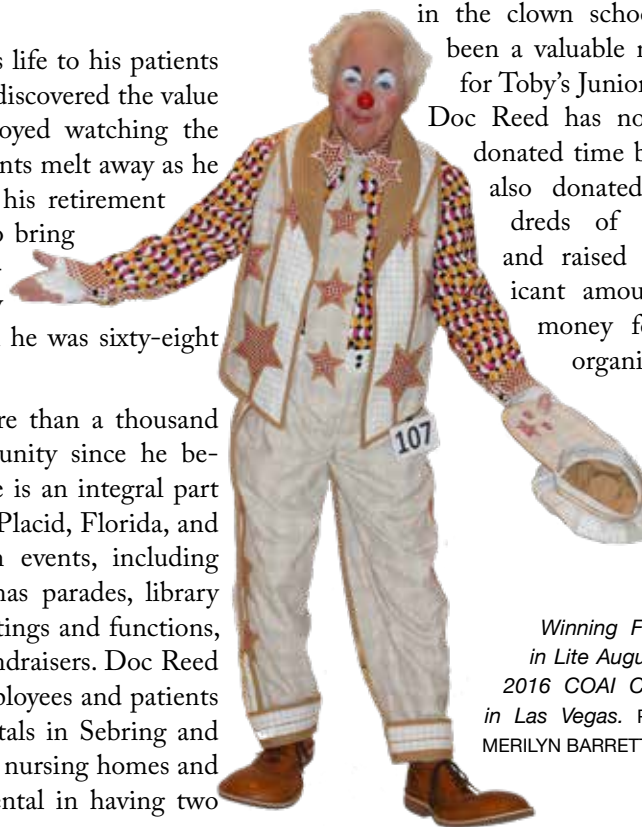
Editor's note: At the 2019 COAI Convention, Dr. Nicholas Reed—known as “Doc Reed”—was hospitalized for a rare condition that severely affected his balance and his hearing. As he was being carried out of the hotel on a stretcher, he smiled and waved at his friends, calling out, “Paradeability!” He was able to return to the convention in time to receive the Excellence in Clowning Award, but surgery and months of recovery awaited him when he returned home to Florida. His many friends will be happy to know that he has made a remarkable recovery. He has regained most of his hearing and life is back to mostly normal—that is, as normal as life can be for a clown! We want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Doc Reed and review some of his amazing accomplishments that led to receiving the Excellence in Clowning Award.

Dr. Nicholas Reed spent more than forty years dedicating his life to his patients as a doctor of obstetrics and gynecology. Along the way, he discovered the value of humor therapy. He enjoyed watching the fear and anxiety of his patients melt away as he brought in laughter. After his retirement in 2008, he was inspired to bring humor to a much wider audience as a clown. He only regrets that he waited until he was sixty-eight before he began clowning.

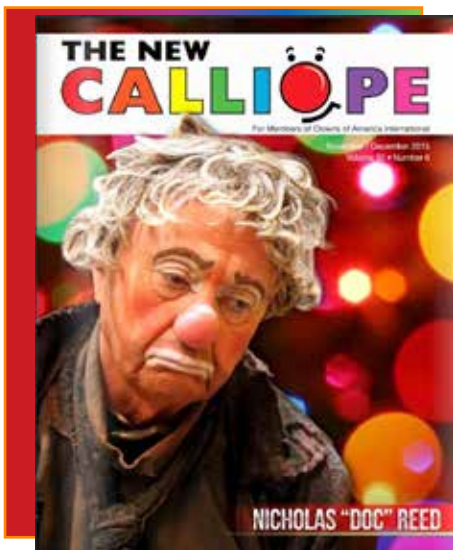
Doc Reed has spent more than a thousand hours giving to his community since he became “Doc the Clown.” He is an integral part of his community in Lake Placid, Florida, and is involved in many town events, including Veterans Day and Christmas parades, library activities, Rotary Club meetings and functions, fairs, festivals, and many fundraisers. Doc Reed has performed for both employees and patients at the AdventHealth hospitals in Sebring and Lake Placid, as well as local nursing homes and churches. He was instrumental in having two

murals which honor clowning painted in downtown Lake Placid, a city known for its murals.

Doc Reed has also dedicated much of his time in service to clowning. He has been extremely involved with Toby’s Clown Alley, Foundation, and Clown School since he started clowning. He has been a trustee in the organization for ten years. He’s also served as a teacher in the clown school and been a valuable mentor for Toby’s Junior Joey’s. Doc Reed has not only donated time but has also donated hundreds of kazoos and raised significant amounts of money for the organization.



Winning First Place in Lite Auguste at the 2016 COAI Convention in Las Vegas. PHOTO BY MERILYN BARRETT



The November/December 2015 issue of The New Calliope, featuring Doc Reed, is available to COAI members in the Vault at www.mycoai.com.



PHOTO BY MERILYN BARRETT

Doc Reed has also played a key role in Toby's Clown Museum, also in Lake Placid. He was not only at the groundbreaking but has helped set up the museum and become one of its tour guides. As a teacher, Doc Reed's classes on hospital clowning, creating kazoos, and building clown cars are particularly popular.

Doc the Clown began his clown education at Toby's Clown School in 2008.

He has attended every COAI convention since 2009, except for one year when he was ill with pneumonia. He enjoys attending the many and varied workshops available at each convention and continually works on building his skills. He has also enjoyed the education he has gained from Toby's Clown Cruises. Doc Reed's Alley and Toby's Clown Museum hold workshops, as well. In addition to the more specific clown classes, Doc Reed has enjoyed broader learning with classes in magic, balloon sculpting, and face painting.

One of the aspects of COAI Conventions which has appealed most to Doc Reed is competition. He has competed in a wide variety of categories and won many awards. One of those who has recommended Doc Reed for this award, his friend, Richard Smith, wrote, "I met Nicholas back in 2009 when he came to one of COAI conventions. It was hard to believe by looking at his appearance that he had only been a clown for a short time. He had an outstanding overall appearance... I can't tell you what a privilege it was for me to have someone like him competing at our competition." Nicholas has won three first-place awards in the character competition, as well as a first in hobo/tramp, lite auguste, and classic white face.

Dr. Reed has also won many awards in the performance categories of competition. He has won first place in single paradeability, group paradeability, and second place in group skits, among many other awards. The group paradeability performance which he did with his friend, Richard Smith, called "Mobile Dentist," was especially popular.

The time and energy Nicholas Reed has devoted to clowning over the past ten years give ample evidence of his clown heart. He has dedicated his senior years to excelling at the clown arts, bringing laughter to many, and



Dr. Nicholas Reed receives the Excellence in Clowning Award (held by Richard Smith, left) and a giant get-well card presented by President Mike Cox (right) at the 2019 COAI Convention following Doc's release from the hospital. MERILYN BARRETT PHOTO

inspiring others to do the same. He has been recommended for the Excellence in Clowning Award by many of his clown peers, including Darrell Jingst, Lynn Small, Larry Smith, Caitrina Monaco, Laverne Fox, Robert Krisby, Sandy Pelski, and Richard Smith. In addition, he has been recommended by James Fansler, the Lake Placid Police Chief; Dottie Robinette from AdventHealth; Eileen May, the CEO of the Lake Placid Chamber of Commerce; Louis Ojeda from the Lake Placid Rotary Club; and Sally Kinsey of the Lake Placid Women's Club.

Nicholas Reed came to clowning late in life. However, he has made a huge impact in the art of clowning, Toby's Clown Alley, and the lives of many in his community. Doc Reed feels that his life has been enhanced, as well. As Marcy Chapman quoted in her article, "More Than Clowning Around," in *Florida Currents* in 2014, Doc Reed says, "The art of clowning—especially with a little spirituality tossed in—helps relieve fears, stress, and anxiety. I try to offer support and be uplifting. Just let a clown get down on his knees and sing, 'Let Me Call You Sweetheart' to a patient in an Alzheimer's unit, and a light comes on. Maybe I am healing myself. I often feel the benefits are a 50/50 split." **TNC**



Nancy and Nicholas Reed.

Clown Ideas During the Pandemic

By Connie “Punkin” Morrow

The year 2020 has been historic and it’s not even half over! Many businesses are closed and events in which clowns participate have been cancelled. None of us has ever experienced anything like the COVID-19 virus. During the Spanish Flu outbreak just over a hundred years ago, five hundred million people, one-third of the world’s population, became infected with the number of deaths estimated at fifty million worldwide and about 675,000 in the United States. One of those was my own fraternal grandmother. She died when my father was just five years old.

Yes, this is a historic time, and it’s a bad time for our clown family.

However, clowns have still found ways to keep spreading joy. Some are doing live shows or educational segments using Facebook or other online platforms.

Some of our clowns are doing window shows. These can be done while people, especially those in nursing homes and hospitals, watch through their windows.

Many of those who can sew are making facemasks. Some have clown faces on them, while others feature balloon dogs and clowns.

Some clowns are decorating their front porches or lawns with balloons. Many news stories have been broadcast about how great these sculptures are. People can just drive by and check out these great works of art.

Speaking of drive-bys, parades are popping up all over the country. People in decorated cars have taken time to drive by the houses of those celebrating a birthday or another milestone. It’s quite a sight!

Being one who likes to take the road less traveled, I decided to do clown drive-bys. I went to my town’s Facebook page and offered to come by the houses of children celebrating birthdays whose parties had been cancelled.

I drive up to the house with my car horn blowing that sounds like a clown horn. I park on the road or in the driveway, always keeping more than the six feet away from everyone. I play “Happy Birthday” on my ukekazoo (bought from Captain Visual) and sing. Then, I either do a magic trick or ask if the child would like an earwax cleaning. I use an oversized Q-Tip that I made with a sign that says, “FREE EARWAX CLEANING.” The kids think it’s hysterical! I have a few



Punkin visits birthday children in her socially-distanced, drive-by appearances.

other props that I use, as well. At the end, I throw confetti and yell, “Happy birthday!” Both the kids and parents love it!

If you’re bored and want to do some clowning, try some of these ideas. I don’t charge for any of this. It’s my way of giving back.

Connie “Punkin” Morrow is COAI’s 2020 Clown of the Year. punkin@punkintheclown.com **TNC**

In Defense of the NOSE

By Mark Renfro

It may be the smallest mask in the world, but it is also our biggest billboard. Nothing says “clown” like a big red nose! That piece of rubber we hang in the middle of our faces is the international symbol for fun. No other part of our wardrobe does as much to let the world know who we are.

Think I’m overstating the case? Ask a room full of second graders to draw pictures of a clown. You’ll get a wonderful variety of shapes and forms with green triangle hair, square yellow hats, or blue oval shoes. Every picture will be different, but most will share one similarity: there, right in the middle of the face, is a big red circle!

If I held up a simple line sketch of a face quickly drawn on a piece of paper and asked, “What is this?” you might answer, “Just a face.” If I showed you the same sketch with a red circle added, I’m sure your response would be, “That’s a clown.” Clearly, clowns and red noses go together. The visual image of a clown is important to our audiences. Wearing a clown nose fulfills a primary expectation they have of us.

Why in the world would we want to let them down?

Sadly, these days many clowns seem to be doing just that. The theatrical power of a clown nose is casually tossed aside. Is wearing a nose just too much trouble? When I ask people why they have chosen not to wear a nose, the responses generally fall into two categories. First, there are those who claim some kind of physical discomfort. I wonder what those people would think if the next time they bought tickets to see Swan Lake, the curtain went up on a stage full of dancers wearing sweat suits and sneakers instead of those “uncomfortable” tutus and toe shoes. It is not unusual in the performing arts for a performer to accept some level of discomfort for the sake of pleasing an audience. Clowns are no exception.

To be honest, though, the clown marketplace is overflowing with options for the nose: different materials, different adhesives, noses on strings or attached to glasses, designs that leave the nostrils clear. With all these choices, finding a comfortable and wearable nose isn’t difficult.

The second response I often get when I ask people why they aren’t wearing a nose is, “But I am.” On those occasions, I’ve learned to lean in for a closer look. There is something there. It’s flat, no bigger than a dime, and often shaped like a flower, heart, or star. It’s something; I’m just not sure it’s a clown nose. In fact, those odd tips often strike me as some sort of pimple or wart. “They are so cute,” people tell me. Well, to each his own, but I’d much rather have my audience say “clown” instead of “cute” any day of the week.

Is it hot here? I can really sense that some people are getting steamy under their big clown collars. That’s my point! We spend so much time and effort enlarging and exaggerating every other piece of our visual presentation (big shoes, big hair, big pants, big dresses, and that aforementioned big collar). Why then when it comes to something as important as our noses would anyone choose to go small?

Time and time again, I have witnessed the incredible power of a clown nose, on both the performer and the audience. Can you be a good clown without one? Of course. But not wearing one should never be the first choice.

Red, round, and so full of possibilities, clown noses are a classic symbol of a great profession. I love wearing mine. It is a badge of honor, really. My nose has been the ticket to some great adventures through the years. Wear yours proudly and see where it takes you! **TNC**



HARRY'S HILARITIES

Sometimes you need a funny line to fill in a few seconds while you reach for a prop or a volunteer is coming up to help. Here are some general comments that will fill in short gaps when needed.

[Take your glasses off.] I don’t need these. I just use them to see.

It’s funny—alarm clocks always go off when you’re sleeping.

The closer you watch, the less you see, and the less you see is better for me!

Some day you’ll see my name in lights. I’m changing it to “Exit.”

If you think education is expensive, try ignorance!

I do nothing, but I do it well. The only problem is, I never know when I’m finished!

I take the impossible and make it a reality. I take the reality and make it look easy. I take the easy and make it look beautiful.

The next trick works on mind over matter. Even if you mind, it doesn’t matter.

Sir, do you have any matches? No? Here, have some. [Toss a handful of matches in his direction.]

I lent a friend money for plastic surgery. Now I don’t know what he looks like.



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.



Hello Kitten Bracelet

By Patricia "Pockets" Bunnell



1. Inflate a white 360, leaving a 6-inch tip. Form two six-inch bubbles. Twist together, tie off and deflate, and discard remaining balloon. Set aside.
2. Inflate a white 160, leaving a 6-inch tip. Form a 1.5-inch bubble followed by a 2-inch loop. Roll the bubble through the loop to lock it in place.

3. Make an 8- to 9-inch bubble followed by another 2-inch loop. Tie in at the nozzle. Deflate the remaining but leave about a 3-inch tail.
4. Stuff this cluster into the 360 cluster as shown.
5. Using the tail from the 160, wrap it around the side of the 360 from ear to ear to lock the two clusters together. Trim excess ends.
6. Inflate a red 160 about half way. Form two 1.5-inch loops, followed by an extra small pinch twist. This makes a bow. Deflate remaining balloon leaving a 2-inch tail. Wrap the tail around an ear. Add artwork!



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.

HEALING THE LAUGH-GIVER'S SPIRIT

By Tricia "Pricilla Mooseburger" Manuel



I asked the mind hive on Facebook what I should write about for my next article. I was flooded with wonderful suggestions. So many came from clowns I know, and some I hope to know in the future. I am humbled that people think I have the knowledge to cover such a wide array of topics! But for now I will snag Christopher Hudert's suggestion: "How about either being or finding the light of laughter in dark times...and healing the laugh giver's spirit?"

I like this subject, because I have been struggling lately. What?! Yes, you might be surprised that the queen of the hair-brained scheme does get troubled. I have a brain that swirls around and around like a blender. So when there is a problem I go into "fix it" mode. You know, "Come on gang, let's put on a show!" I grew up watching *Our Gang* reruns every morning before I went to school. There was nothing that couldn't be solved by a show put on by a bunch of kids in an empty shed!

I made puppets as a kid and put on my own shows hiding behind the pie-shaped sectional couch in our living room. I talked the neighbor kid, Jerry, into being a part of my shows in the basement. I convinced Sister Clair that our sixth grade class could do a show called the *St. Tim's Comedy Half-hour*. (We didn't have enough material for a full hour.) I helped revive community theater in my small town and you know all about Mooseburger Clown Arts Camp and *The All Star Clown Show!* (If you don't, it is the show at the end of our week-long camp. Everyone has a part, and it is the highlight of a fun-filled week.)

Kazoo bandleader—yup, that's me. Red Nose Reader founder—check. Mask maker during a worldwide pandemic. Okay, but now what?

By the time you read this Minnesota will be at the end of the long sad summer. Not only did all our events get cancelled—and I mean *everything* from Memorial Day celebrations to the State Fair, for crying out loud. We had the horrific death of George Floyd that sparked riots, looting and destruction.

Enough. This is just too much for my little clown brain to deal with. Christopher's question is a good one. How do the joy-givers keep going? How do we heal our spirits when there really isn't much to laugh about?

First, sit down and have a cookie! I think I've said it before, but it bears repeating. We have to keep going. We can't give up now. Inspirations can come from different places. We are creative people. Be on the lookout for opportunity! Most of you know I own a costume rental shop. Needless to say, there has not been much going on there! But yesterday, one of my favorite customers—Betsy from St. Benadict's Retirement Center—came in to get some costumes. We talked about how hard the isolation has been on her residents. I told her how hard it has been on the clown community as well. I have rented costumes for her staff to wear to cheer up the residents for years. It is always fun to collaborate with Betsy to come up with new ideas to surprise them. I loved it when she let the residents shoot Nerf guns at my cupid costume. Hilarious!

As we were chatting she told me they have their own cable-like channel in the facility. "Hey, can my clown club record some skits for you to run on your channel?" I asked. We started coming up with all kinds of ideas to help cheer the residents—and my clowns, too! I can't wait for our club to get together and get going on this. There will probably be a lot of solo acts due to social distancing. But we might come up with some fun new ideas and gags. We will even be able to do a parade outside their gathering room! I don't know about you, but I sure could use a parade right now.

Back to the idea of healing the laugh-giver's spirit. You can't give what you don't have. You may need a break to fill your tank. But when a break has been forced on us, it gets tougher to figure out ways to feel better. While there may not be a lot of opportunities to clown right now, please do not give up. Take a look around you. The best way to lift your own spirits is to do something for someone else. Call up a clown friend who is isolated and tell her a joke. Put your make-up on and make a silly video. The videos I make with Julia to promote my business are more about being together and creating something ridiculous that heals our hurting hearts than anything else. A girlfriend and I play the uke together when things get too stressful, and she's in Texas! Look for chances to have some fun. Take a step back from the media. It is a proven stressor. The old "if it bleeds, it leads" mentality is designed to keep us glued to the screen. They don't want us relaxed peaceful and happy. Why? Because if we were we wouldn't need anything from them. Think about it! Everyone is trying to sell us something. But what you can't buy is kindness. Look for an opportunity to be kind. It is a great stress reliever.

Here is the hard part. We all will have to reset. We can make it an opportunity or a setback. We are going to face change. Yes, this is an opportunity for COAI as well. This is not the time to say, "That will never work." It is the time to say, "Let's give it a try!" That is what will heal us. Choosing not to do something will ensure our failure. So let's do something positive with a smile and a laugh!

If you are interested in more information or a group rate for Red Nose Readers, check them out at www.red-nosereader.org or email rednosereader@gmail.com. An easy training session is available with membership. **TNC**

POCKETS'S

Handy Giggles



**Heather
"Pockets"
Wuersching**

Here are four more great ideas that you can use to strike up a conversation with the person in front of you. If you handle it well, you will have them talking and laughing in no time.

My friend, Heather "Pockets" Wuersching, has been collecting Gag Bag ideas for thirteen years, and she happily shares her collection. For her, the bags are not just freebies to give away. Instead, they provide a moment to be remembered for a long time to come. Pockets is not just handing stuff out; she is creating memories.

We have set up a page of four labels which you can print and use if you do not want to design your own. E-mail me and ask for the PDF called "Handy Giggles," and I will

Hens' Teeth: "Most people think that the idea of Hens' Teeth is just a fairy tale. Now, we have discovered that, in far outback Australia, at the Back of Bourke, even beyond the Black Stump, lives a strange breed of chickens that have teeth. What is most peculiar is that their teeth will only remain if they stay in that region. Any chickens that live outside that area are toothless. It is widely believed that anyone fortunate enough to find any of these rare hens' teeth will be blessed with the most remarkable good luck. They will be even luckier than someone with a rabbit's foot or a four-leaf clover!" For these rare hens' teeth, Pockets uses a spoonful of rice.



Hands-Free Cell Phone Kit: "There are many occasions when it is necessary to have both hands available and still be able to be connected to the cell phone, particularly while driving the car. Here is the perfect solution. It will firmly hold the phone against your ear, leaving both hands free." In the bag is a large rubber band.

GAG BAGS

By Ted "Twaddles" White

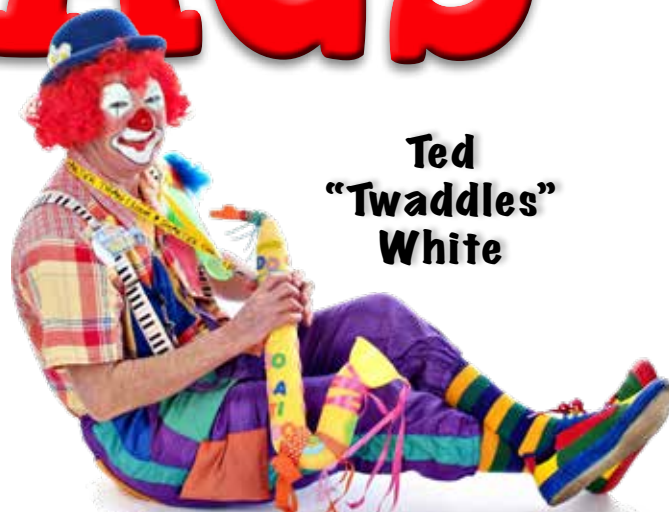
send the PDF of the labels to you. The previous six sets of labels are still available if you want any of them, as well.

The clear plastic resealable bags I use are about four inches across the top, and 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 so you can adjust the size to suit.

These are the items she uses in this set of Gag Bags:

Most importantly, have fun. Have fun making up the bags and then have more fun handing them out and interacting with the person in front of you.

Ted "Twaddles" White has served as the COAI International RVP 2014–2020. Contact him by e-mail at twaddles2014@hotmail.com. **TNC**



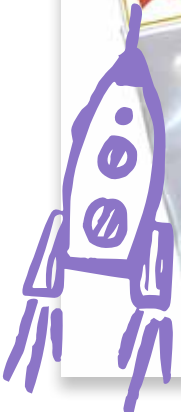
Ted "Twaddles" White



Heal the Universe Pills: "The world has many problems, and we all need to try to solve them. These pills might not work, but what have you got to lose? It is worth trying. The green pills stop climate change; the red end racism, the yellow ones stop bullies, and the pink pills end poverty." For the "medication," Pockets uses Tic Tacs (the Fruit Adventure pack) in the bag, but any small round candies, including jellybeans, could be used, as long as you can sort out the colors.



Money Tree Seeds: "Everybody would love to have a money tree in his back yard. Now, it may be possible. Plant these seeds, and if you care for them properly, they might grow into your very own money tree." In the bag, place some Skittles. Each one has an S printed on it that we can pretend is a dollar sign.



Send in the Clowns

Bringing Happiness to Puerto Rico during the Earthquake Crisis

By Angel Morales

It all started January 6, 2020. News services reported that a damaging, magnitude 5.8 earthquake struck Puerto Rico at 5:32 a.m. It was centered about eight miles south-southeast of Indios, Puerto Rico, at a depth of about 3.7 miles below ground. The Puerto Rico Director of Emergency Management Carlos Acevedo said that no major injuries were reported, but some homes were damaged in Guanica, and a home collapsed in Guayanilla. Geologists warned of more tremors to come.

During the hours and days following the earthquake, the island experienced constant aftershocks, some with magnitudes over 4.0, occurring up to twelve times per day. Many houses were so damaged that people could not live in them. Instead, they chose to set up tents in the streets or move to another region of the island. Guanica, Guayanilla, Yauco, Penuelas, Lajas, Cabo Rojo, and some parts of Ponce were all affected.

To bring some laughter and happiness to the disheartened population, we brought in the clowns! Joeys from all over Puerto Rico rushed to the southern region of the island to meet the needs of those affected. We brought supplies of water, canned foods, medications, and personal items. Many brought treats for the children and special items for the elderly. Every weekend and even on weekdays, clowns packed up their cars, some even filling buses, and drove in with helpers and supplies. It was amazing to see such heroic support for all those in need. Our clowns were in action throughout all the affected areas.

I take my hat off to all those who jumped in to provide a hand and hug to those in need. The people in the affected areas were extremely grateful. I could see the tears in their eyes as they spoke, blessing us all. The kids were very happy and excited to see the clowns in their hometowns. The faces of the old folks and kids were worth a million dollars. The photos show some of the clowns that participated; I know there were many more.



Besitos Trilly Trombom in in Penuelas.



Besitos Trilly Trombom making balloon figures in Yuaca.

I would like to thank Judy Quest; her Alley, Omaha's Wild Clowndum; and Susan "Sparkles" Dorland for their donations that helped us. We will continue helping those in need by distributing supplies and lifting spirits, but because of COVID-19, the Puerto Rican government has banned all nonessential travel and gatherings. When we can, we'll return to the southern side of the island and continue to help.

To make these conditions worse, I woke early on May 2, 2020 after not



Lucerito, Alegrita, and Poncho spreading happiness.



Giving thanks to "Besitos Trilly" in Yauco.

sleeping well. I put on my face mask and gloves and headed out to Walmart. The line to enter the store was long, and while I waited, I heard a delivery truck pass on the road with a tremble. I figured it was the vibration of the truck, but the woman in front of me said her shopping cart shook. Another person in line mentioned that there had been an earthquake a few minutes before. My phone beeped to tell me that my earthquake app had gone off. As I walked into the store, it beeped again...and again. While I was shopping, it beeped twelve times. The quakes ranged from 3.5 to 4.0 in magnitude, and it was not a good situation.

As I was in line to pay, I heard everyone in the store talking about the damage the earthquake had caused. We were all in shock. With the pandemic and now earthquakes, it felt like we had gone back to all that went on in January and

Continued on page 26

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Bev “Rebo” Bergeron

RENAISSANCE FUNNY MAN

By Skip Way

Few names are universally recognized across the spectrum of television, magic, clowns, and balloons. Bev Bergeron is one of those names. This man broke into professional show business at the age of fourteen. He toured with the well-known *Willard the Wizard* tent show and Dr. Silkini’s spook shows.

With master showman Mark Wilson, Bev helped to produce internationally syndicated television shows and hundreds of worldwide trade shows. He starred in Walt Disney World’s Diamond Horseshoe Revue for sixteen years and has performed in all the top entertainment venues, including Las Vegas, Reno, Atlantic City, and the Radio City Music Hall. He brought laughter and a touch of home to our military forces serving in Vietnam combat zones on three Hollywood USO tours.

The Smithsonian Institute used his informative book, *Willard the Wizard*, as a key research tool on their tribute to American Tent Theater. Magician and author John Fisher selected Bergeron’s *Willard the Wizard* as one of the top twelve books written on the subject of magic.

In 1992, the Society of American Magicians elected him to their Hall of Fame, and four years later, he served as the International President of the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

Imagine how excited this writer was to receive an invitation to sit and chat with this great American showman.

The New Calliope: Hello, Bev! It is a thrill to sit and chat with one of our superstars!

BB: Hello, Skip!

TNC: I have followed you since you shared my TV screen with Mark Wilson as Rebo the Clown on *The Magic Land of Alakazam* and *The Magic Circus*. For me, your name is right in there with Ali Bongo, Carl Ballantine, and Karrell Fox.

BB: Well, that’s kind of you to say. Thank you.

TNC: We also share a connection through the Air Force.

BB: You entered well after I did. I enlisted right at the time that the Air Force was splitting away from the Army Air Corps. The commanders came out and announced that we would no longer be sleeping in barracks and there would no longer be a mess hall. We thought we had it made, but you know what they did, right?

TNC: It’s hard to tell.

BB: They just changed the signs to read Dormitory and Dining Hall. The Air Force had ways of messing with our minds.

TNC: Ha! Too true! You’ve had a very colorful life in magic with a legacy of inventions, memories, and books.

BB: Yeah. I invented or modified many of the illusions used on *The Magic Land of Allakazam*, including the Mismade Lady and a Doll House effect I call “The Big Shoe.” I was one of the first to combine Abbott’s three-bottle comedy set into a full multiplying bottle routine. Before you knew it, the whole world was copying me. I’m also the guy that made one-balloon modeling what it is today.

TNC: I remember watching guys like John Shirley and Wally Boag on nationally syndicated shows like The Ed Sullivan Show, twisting the dime-store airship balloons of the 1960s into basic animals. These were extremely simple animals by today’s standards, but they were big news back then. The so-called pencil balloons that we call 260s today were rare.

BB: Exactly. Today, we call them 340s and 315s. That’s all there was back then. Wally Boag used these expensive balloons, and I was too cheap to buy them. In 1958, I saw a guy at a fair up in Vancouver twisting two-inch balloons, but his designs were all off. I took his concept and added various refinements, resulting in figures like the poodle with the poofy tail. I took it from there and created many of the basic figures still used today.



The stars of The Magic Land of Allakazam: Nani Darnell, Rebo, and Mark Wilson.



Bev Bergeron in his office. PHOTO BY CRAIG FENNESSY

TNC: How did you get started in it all?

BB: Well, my father loved to sing, and he used to sing in the annual minstrel shows back then. He had a great voice and belted it out like Al Jolson. I was raised with this as a kid. Since I couldn't sing a note then, I had to look elsewhere for my spot on the stage. When I was ten years old, I saw my first magic show.

My father was a volunteer fire chief, and the department sponsored a two-week run for Willard the Wizard. Being the chief's son, I had a front-row seat for every show and was flabbergasted with this guy. I immediately started collecting magic tricks from Skinner's Raisin Bran. Inside of each box, they'd have a little two-inch long by three-inch wide paper with instructions for various tricks. If you collected five of them and mailed them in, Skinner would send back a little magic booklet. Of course, the booklet just combined the same tricks found

inside the cereal box. I still have a bunch of those.

I slowly built up a good set of tricks, and with a friend of mine, I formed a neighborhood Bulls Eye Club. We set a goal of raising money for the USO and the Red Cross during World War II by collecting newspapers and aluminum. We eventually got the idea for a neighborhood carnival from watching the Our Gang short features in the theaters.

TNC: Some might know them as The Little Rascals with Spanky and Alfalfa.

BB: Exactly, but this was the earliest version. The shorts challenged us to raise money for the USO by hosting neighborhood carnivals, and we did! We had pony rides and shooting galleries with BB guns. We built a go-kart from our old roller skates. Our biggest kid, Charles, would push the kids around in the go-kart. My sister sold popcorn and sodas. We did this several times a year, but we always called it our annual carnival.

Eugene Craig, whom we called Diddy, grew up to be a big Dallas radio and television evangelist. He was the head magician, and I was his assistant in the evening's big magic show. Diddy outgrew us after a couple of years and moved on, leaving us without a magic show. Everyone looked at me and told me that I had to take his place. Oh, no, no! Not me, man!

About that same time, I discovered my first magic shop on Travis Street in Houston. It was little more than a little newsstand joint, a very narrow space with a guy named Howard Campbell in the back selling magic. I bought my very first magic kit from him, and boy, was I disappointed. It had these cheesy little effects common to magic kits, such as pulling a safety pin through a handkerchief. It wasn't until I matured a bit that I recognized the actual value of magic with everyday objects. In fact, I still use several effects from that kit today.

INSPIRATION AND HUMOR

I finally worked my way up to real magic, and he sold me a Sand Frame for three dollars. That was a lot of money for a kid in those days.

TNC: Right around thirty dollars in today's currency. A Sand Frame, for those who may not know, is a picture frame that is shown empty. Then, a chosen card, page from a book, or other image appears sealed inside the frame.

BB: Or vanishes. I used to hide my money in that Sand Frame and set it on my dresser. My sister would come in looking for my hiding place and never found it.

Then, I discovered Douglas Magicland in Dallas. I ordered their magic catalog for the princely sum of ten cents. The first thing I ordered was a Fifty-Fifty Deck. I didn't bother reading the instructions. Who does? I took the deck out of the box, spread it, and saw a regular deck. I turned it face down and pulled out the King of Clubs. I slid it back in and tapped the deck a few times like the description described. I turned the top card over, and it was the King of Clubs! I put that card back on top, counted down ten cards, and there was the King of Clubs again! I did it a few more times, and every time that King of Clubs popped

up, I'd turn the deck over and go, "Yup! Regular deck! How in the heck?" Scared me half to death! I put that deck back in its case and set it aside until the next day. That's when I looked a little closer and found the set-up.

TNC: You performed straight through junior and senior high school. Did you go to college?

BB: I attended the University of Texas for two years, and then the Korean War kicked up. Now, this was a time when a lot of World War II vets were attending college. I was the youngest guy in my dorm, and most of the others were vets. We'd get together at night, and they'd all spin their war stories. I joined them once to sneak over to burn down the A&M Texas Bonfire. That's where I first learned the keys to surviving behind enemy lines. These guys dressed me in a Texas A&M outfit and showed me how to conceal and ignite the incendiary "bomb." When the device didn't light, they went back, signed out a Piper Cub airplane, and dive-bombed the pile. We had our own air force! We got in trouble over that, but we had a great time that night!

TNC: Why did you leave, if you don't mind my asking?

BB: Well, Korea was becoming a hot topic, and I found out that my draft number had come up. My brother-in-law had served with Patton's Third Army on that forced march across France to the Battle of the Bulge. He said, "Don't you go in the Army. They'll have you crawling through the mud on your belly." So, I joined the Air Force, and they had me crawling through the mud on my belly.

TNC: Your showman skills served you well, though, since you soon found a home in Special Services.

BB: Well, that and others. One top-dog sergeant found out that I could pick locks. Now, in those days, you could get all the green paint you wanted, but everyone wanted white. White paint was worth its weight in gold! My job was to raid all the various units' paint sheds and bring home any white paint I found.

TNC: Nothing's changed. My lock picking skills supported many a clandestine supply run. It's the G.I. way. After leaving the military, you returned to the University of Texas?

BB: Yes, and shortly after that, I met up with Mark Wilson. I'd known him and Nani from the early TAOM (Texas Association of Magicians) conventions. They were frequent performers at the TAOM. I graduated from college in January 1957 and went to work for an ad agency in Houston for six months. Walter Blaney introduced me to Mark, and I helped set up his early live and television appearances in Houston. He asked me to be his stage manager for his show at the Texas State Fair that year.

As I was setting up, Mark came up to me and said, "We are in trouble!" I responded with, "What do you mean *we* are in trouble?" He said, "Well, I sold them a clown on the show, and we can't afford one." Then, he added, "So you'll have to be the clown."

Now, I had left clowning behind in high school and really didn't want to do this. But, a professional does what he has to do for the show. Afterwards, all the Dallas guys went to Mark and told him that they had to keep me in his show.



Rebo and Mark Wilson on stage at the Texas State Fair.



Cover illustration of Rebo and Mark Wilson from a record issued by Peter Pan Records.

They really liked my clown character and the chemistry between Mark and me. That's how I created Rebo.

TNC: How did the name Rebo come about?

BB: Mark chose the name Rebo. I wanted to use Bevo, Bev with an "O." That also happened to be the name of the mascot of the University of Texas and the name of an Anheuser-Busch alcohol-free beer sold during prohibition. You'll hear it mentioned in *The Music Man* tune, "Ya Got Trouble," as well. Mark was opposed to it because of those outside connections, so I went ahead and used Mark's suggestion of Rebo.

TNC: Curiously, there's a Disney connection to Rebo. The Disney Italian comics have a character named Rebo, the Emperor of Saturn, intent on conquering the Earth. Donald always seems to get in his way. There's no connection, I suppose. [Skip eyes Bev suspiciously.] *The Magic Land of Allakazam* was my introduction into magic, as it was for many of our baby boomer magicians. When did you two launch the show?

BB: In 1960, Mark sold *The Magic Land of Allakazam* project to the new

sponsors, Kellogg's, and we became the first nationally syndicated magic show ever recorded on videotape. We would carry these massive videotapes into his tiny apartment and stack them to the ceiling. These weren't the little VHS tapes that seem so bulky today. These were massive metal and plastic reels with thick two-inch tapes.

TNC: I remember those. You could lay twenty or more VHS cassettes on top of one of these old reels, and they were heavy!

BB: Exactly! They cost right around six hundred dollars per reel, and a single reel usually held a one-hour show. We were a low-budget operation. I ran the lighting and one of the cameras and then ran around to the front to appear with Mark. I wrote most of the shows and either created or modified many of the illusions. Mark would fly out to sell future sponsorships while I stayed behind to set up the studio for the next show.

TNC: How long did you stay with Mark?

BB: Up through the mid-sixties and early seventies. Mark wasn't paying me, but I was still working with him while booking my own shows. He would hire

people to work his various trade and industrial shows, and I would wind up having him as competition across the aisle from me. I eventually left him altogether and began working with Disney. I wanted to stay in Los Angeles, but Wally Boag took me to the new Walt Disney World Resort with him. Walt Disney's hand was on Wally, and Wally's hand was on me, so we had this little power thing going.

TNC: I always enjoyed seeing Howdy Doody's Clarabell played by Lew Anderson making guest appearances after Howdy left the air. Did Rebo ever make any solo appearances?

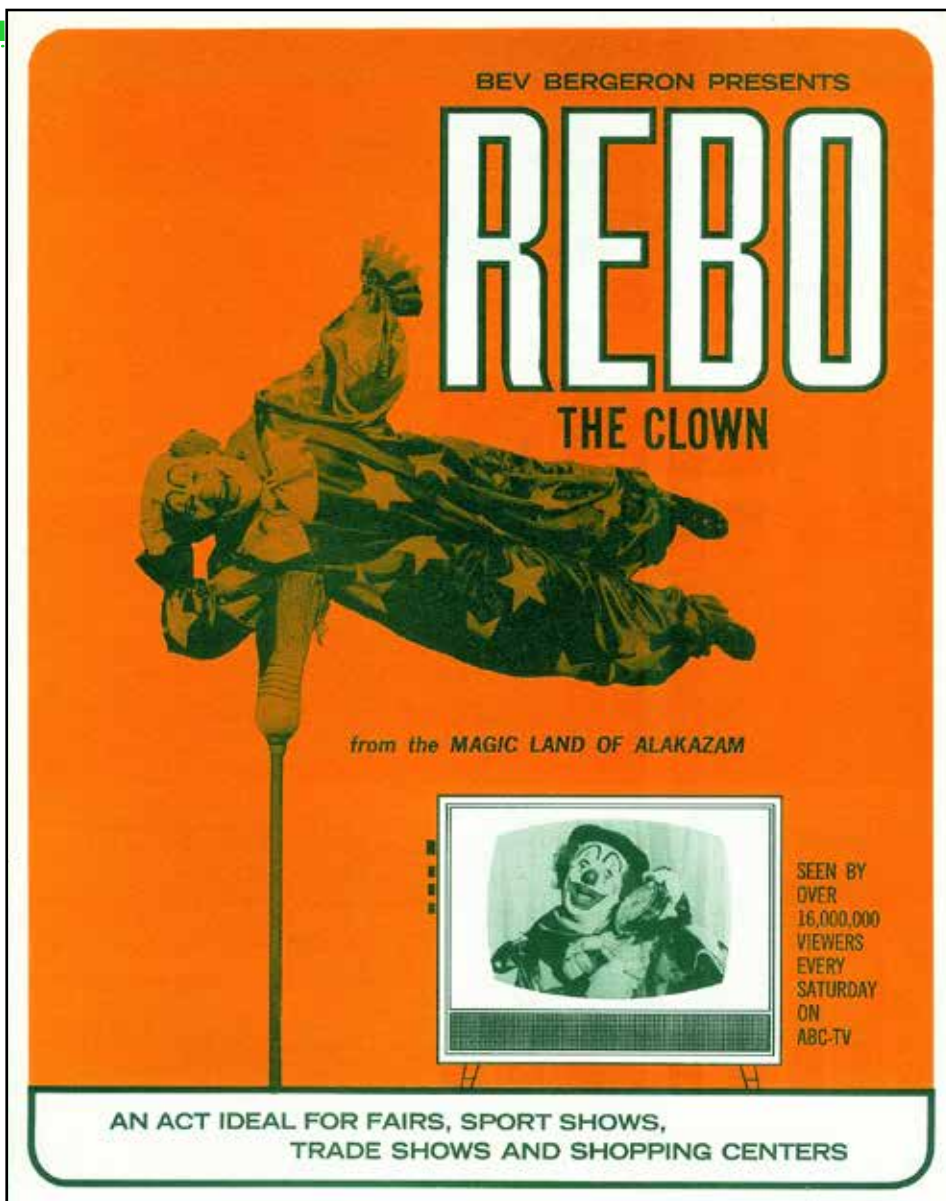
BB: Back in the sixties, there were only five decent clowns in all of California. I made great money back then appearing as Rebo at company events for Hughes Aircraft, General Electric, and other major companies. Today, there are too many mediocre clowns working for peanuts.

TNC: Times have changed.

BB: I'll tell you how much they've changed. I worked a drunken cigarette act across the Far East and here in the States for years. This universal pantomime act drew big laughs. Today, if I were to pull a cigarette out and light it, people would begin clutching their throats crying, "We're dying!"

TNC: It's true with comedy, as well. It seems that a comedian needs to pepper his act with obscenities to land the big bookings. Comedy clubs don't want a full-clean show.

BB: I headlined at a comedy club not long ago, and the two opening comedians were filthy. I mean, I hadn't heard rants like that in all the Vegas burlesque houses I worked. I had never heard language like that on a stage. These two young ladies came up after the show and complimented me on being funny without resorting to the blatant filth of the first two guys. That's the difference between shock humor and real talent.



Bev Bergeron parlayed his television fame as Rebo the Clown into a successful business making live appearances.

I think that's changing though. I saw Penn & Teller when they toured a few years back, and their entire show was super clean. They killed the audience! Talent like theirs has no reason to resort to shock humor these days. I haven't seen such a great and thoroughly entertaining magic show in years.

TNC: You worked at Disneyland's Golden Nugget Saloon for a spell, didn't you?

BB: Yeah, I did that for a few months to cover for Wally while he was running around setting up Florida. I also made three trips to the Far East during that time. I went into Vietnam and on into Cambodia, where I wasn't supposed to be.

TNC: You tend to find yourself in places you're not supposed to be quite a lot.

BB: I do tend to fall into these situations! The Vietnam War was still in full swing. I was in the country in August of 1971 entertaining the troops, and I landed on a river patrol boat. I asked the boat's captain where we were. He hesitated and said, "Cambodia. You're not supposed to be here, and I'm not supposed to be here. Perhaps it's better if we don't talk about it."

TNC: Those USO Showcases really kept us going back then. I first met Dixie Dooley as he toured with a USO Tour.

BB: I'll tell ya. I flew out of Saigon back to the States, and I could still smell the gunpowder on the guys sitting next to me. I really admired those guys. I landed in San Francisco, spent a week at home, and then packed my bags and headed for Florida.

TNC: How long did you stay with Disney?

BB: Fifteen years plus.

TNC: And you still live in Florida.

BB: Oh, yeah. I wouldn't go back to Los Angeles now. My wife is from Santa Monica, and when we go back to visit, it's all changed. I don't like Los Angeles anymore. When I first pulled my trailer into Santa Monica, it was a beautiful city. Charlie Miller was living with me then. I told that story at an I.B.M. Convention once, and Jay Marshall shouted from the back of the room, "Heck, old Charlie Miller lived with everybody!" That's true!

TNC: So, the big question is, do life-long entertainers ever really retire?

BB: Not this one!

TNC: We sincerely hope that you continue to bring fun and laughter to audiences for many years to come, Bev. Anyone interested in learning more or in ordering your book, *Willard the Wizard*, can visit your website at www.bevbergeron.com. Right?

BB: That's right. Everyone is welcome.

TNC: Thank you for sharing this time with us, Bev. You are a national treasure. **TNC**

Skip Way has been a professional children's entertainer for more than forty-five years. Upon retiring from the Air Force, he settled in Raleigh, North Carolina, and began working stand-up comedy and military clubs along the East Coast. While lucrative, he missed the laughter of children and returned to a career in family entertainment as a classic kid-show performer named Happy Dan. Reach him by e-mail at rway@nc.rr.com.

JUNIOR JOEYS

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

INSPIRATION AND HUMOR



One day I looked at the word *imagination*, and I found my name, Gina, in the middle. Then, starting at the beginning of the word, I realized it said, “I’m a Gina-tion.” I’m not sure what a “tion” is, but I laughed when I said the word differently and thought how much I have always loved my imagination. I have childhood memories of “playing house” on the window sill, and to this day I have a little frying pan and spatula to remind me on days that I don’t want to cook or clean that I use to love playing house!

Einstein said that imagination is more important than knowledge. I read up on this subject at www.brighthorizons.com and www.mentalfloss.com and found a list of six proven benefits of using your imagination. Let’s expand on those here.

1. Builds problem-solving skills. Imagination helps us explore the world without fear. We can imagine walking on a tightrope, being in the middle, wobbling and afraid to cross. We jump and land safely, then run to the other side and give a big *ta-da!* Problem solved! We were able to do it safely in our imagination! Or you could be stuck in an imaginary box and wonder how to get out. Maybe you have a doorknob in your pocket or you find a window and open it. How would you solve that problem?

2. Helps your memory. Scientists have found that using your imagination creates more neurons in your brain, which can help fight off dementia when you are older. This is a great reason to always keep an element of clown-thinking in our lives. Some may want to use clowning for the health benefits alone. Keep your imagination alive and feed it like a tiger.

3. Helps you to care about others. If you can imagine what it’s like to be in someone else’s shoes, you can empathize with them. Empathy means having compassion for others, to feel sympathy, concern, and kindness—to understand where they are coming from. These feelings can help you solve a problem, conflict, or misunderstanding.



A scene from “Beginning Clowning for Children” on the COAI Jr. Joeys YouTube channel.

4. Sparks your curiosity. This helps you think about your possibilities. You can picture a successful situation. Imagining what you want to achieve can motivate you to finish a task or reach a goal. If I toss a ball into the air, can I catch it? What if I toss up two balls? If I have a conversation with a puppet, what would it say to me? If you imagine the circus many years ago, you may wonder, “What did those clowns do to make people laugh?” Imagination helps us get a vision of things that we didn’t know before.

5. Can save you money. Using your imagination helps you to be more resourceful and creative. You can imagine a prop or costume and possibly make it yourself. Or you can fix something old by adding new paint. You could use a box or a paper towel tube to explore the world and make a story that feels like you are living in a movie with endless adventures.

6. Helps develop self-confidence. Imagination is a fun way to train your mind to act in new ways. If you are afraid to talk to someone, imagine feeling unafraid and relaxed, holding your head up high, looking people in the eyes, and smiling. See yourself accomplishing something that has been difficult. Maybe it’s just cleaning a messy room. Picture it clean and organized. In your mind you can see it, so you feel confidence in yourself to start the project. Imagine yourself performing a new act, practice it in your mind, and see it from beginning to end. This will help you have confidence when you perform it in front of a real audience.

Imagination is our best friend, our counselor, and our problem solver. Clowning is one of the best ways to play with our imagination. Leaders, mentors, and parents: Children start to use their imaginations at ages three and four. Give your kids costumes and tools of the trade to pretend with. Before you know it they will have skills that will give them confidence as they grow.

Bump a nose!



If you or any of your friends need help or encouragement as a clown, always feel free to contact me, Regina Wollrabe, at coaijrjoeys@gmail.com or by phone at (503) 807-2584. **TNC**



From the Membership Director

Carrie "Shimmy Giggles" Ray

Hey, everyone! I hope everyone is safe and doing well.

Congratulations to our new board members! I welcome you all. I would also like to thank those who voted me back in as Membership Director. I have been very fortunate to have Teresa Gretton as my mentor, but she has decided not to run for the board again. I am sad because she has been an amazing support for me and for so many. She knows so much about COAI and will be truly missed on the board. Of course, I cornered her and told her she had to remain my mentor, and she said that would make her very happy.

I know some members are not working due to Covid-19. If you have experience with computers, you may consider doing virtual shows for day cares, nursing homes, or other customers. You can reach out to libraries as they are looking for ways to reach out virtually to their communities. Also consider helping those of us who are not as knowledgeable so we can all make use of this unusual time. We would love to hear what you have learned and how you are continuing to perform. If you are able to do a live workshop for all COAI members, we would love to hear from you.

You may not have seen that our new president has set up a system so we can order COAI t-shirts, accessories, and more. Check out the information he posted on COAI's Facebook page.

One way to build membership is to contact drama teachers at your local middle schools, high schools, and colleges. Ask if you can talk to their students about clowning. Invite the students to your Alley meeting and get them signed up for your Alley and COAI. If you have any other ideas for building our membership, I'd love to hear from you.

If you haven't joined the COAI Facebook page, please do so. You will find a lot of helpful information on that page.

Don't forget the deadlines for nominations for the Lifetime Achievement Award, Excellence in Clowning, and Clown of the Year. All the information is posted on www.mycoai.com, and deadlines are coming up soon. We have many amazing members who should be recognized for their time, dedication, and service. Please take the time to nominate others. Putting as many details as possible in your nomination letter will give that person a better chance of being selected as a winner.

International Clown Week is August 1-7 this year. I hope you are all working on getting your proclamations, planning your week, and setting up your appointments.

If you cannot do live shows or visits, you might want to offer to do a virtual performance or create a video for them. You can also send a sign promoting clown week. Ask them to take a picture of everyone holding the sign and send it to you. You could also go and drop off a card describes the history of clowning and include a sign and an educational CD for them to watch. Again, ask them to watch the video, take a picture with the sign, and send you a copy of the picture.

With Covid-19, it may be a lot harder to book gigs, so you will need to find other ways to promote International Clown Week. Send out blast e-mails to your clients and include information about International Clown Week. You could also mail out a flyer to educate them about clown week. Include clown noses for them to wear in the picture they send to you. These are just a few things that you can do.

COAI is always looking for ways to offer more value to our members. Our board and committees are looking for ways to give you the best value for your membership. Sammy and his team work very hard to give you the best *Calliope*, books, and resources out in the Vault. If you have any suggestions of how we can do even better as an organization, feel free to contact me or someone else on the board.

I hope we can get back to normal soon, so we can show our love for clowning. Until then, utilize other resources to spread the joy of clowning. Big hugs to all! You are in my prayers.

SEND IN THE CLOWNS— *Continued from page 18*

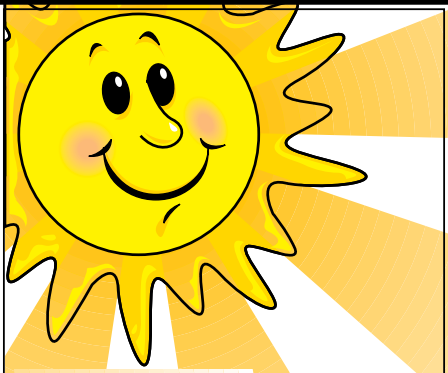
February. It was a hard blow for Ponce, Guayanilla, and the other municipalities close by.

The news of these earthquakes made headlines in the States. Thank God those in the metropolitan San Juan area were not affected, though there was still much fear. The local government was

active in assistance, and our governor and senators of Puerto Rico acted fast. They placed the people affected in rented apartments or hotel rooms and provided many other essential supplies, such as food and clothing.

Now, the hurricane season will be coming very soon, at the beginning of

June. I haven't been sleeping well, and I know many others are facing the same struggles. Many here on the island are suffering much during these days. I keep praying and will continue to pray for those around the world. Please keep us and our island of enchantment in your prayers. God bless us all.



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.

Jeannie "Freckles" Woska
37 Neelans Rd
Enfield, CT 06082-5712

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 Etzkorn
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.
863-221-4183



MAKE IT PERSONAL

The Importance of Branding

By Kynisha "Daisy" Ducre

Put a twist on the unexpected and pay attention to detail!

Genuine professionalism drives booking. Your brand is the potential customer's overall perception of your business. Whether you have been in business for three months or thirty years, attracting and keeping business is key. Your talent and smile are the priorities, but the business of clowning is no laughing matter. We must stay relevant and incorporate cultures and trends in our shows.

One of the first items I wanted when I started was a name tag. I now have a couple from Jamstone Magic. (Magnetic backs rock!) I'm a girlie girl, a cheerleader by nature, and an interior designer by profession, so I definitely know accessories. If that doesn't come easily to you, consult any eight-to-fourteen-year-old girl or a seamstress who likes theatre.



Our names must be visible so people can remember us, and our names should be visible when we are both coming and going. With my sports-themed character, I get kids to cheer for me, and I make the cheer personal with "Go, Daisy, Go!" Check out my page on Instagram ([#godaisygo](#)), and you'll see some of my pictures.

My puppets are sometimes sassy and call me Daisy instead of just "she."

I travel often and love mission trips, and because I want to ensure pictures capture my name or website, I have custom luggage from [www.luggagepros.com](#). Backdrops and custom bumper stickers with your information will work well on your bags, too. Also, don't forget stickers and coloring sheets. My newest and most awesome accessory is this umbrella made by Imani. E-mail [oneskinnybaker@gmail.com](#) and ask for the fifty-dollar Daisy special. **TNC**





Hey Randy!
Let's do a
5 day clown
event this
Fall! I'll see
you there!
-Angel



Join us for 5 days of
sharing, coaching, fun,
inspiration and learning!

The Next Step Workshop
November 11-15, 2020
www.nextstepworkshop.
blogspot.com

Email: procomedy@earthlink.net
Banana Phone: 507.720.6306

A big thank you to **Judy Volkman, Faye Watt, Connie Morrow, Tim Laynor, and Jane Martin** for gifting memberships!

CLOWNS OF AMERICA INTERNATIONAL Annual Membership

- Individual Members—\$45
- Seniors (65+)—\$35
- Junior Joey—\$30
- Family Membership—\$25
- Lifetime Membership—\$1,000
- E-Membership—\$35
- International E-Membership—\$25

\$25 of the COAI membership includes a one-year subscription to *The New Calliope* magazine. Subscriptions are not a benefit of the family memberships. (Only the Individual Membership in the household receives *The New Calliope*.)

Send membership dues to: Clowns of America International, Inc. Post Office Box 122 • Eustis, FL 32727. Make all checks payable to COAI. Join or renew by calling 352-357-1676 or visit www.mycoai.com

MASSIVE CLOWN CONTENT

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A JOURNAL FOR AND BY CLOWNS CELEBRATING THE ART OF CLOWNING.

Deborah “Snuggles” James

Deborah “Snuggles” James, 64, passed away on June 12 following a valiant battle with cancer.

Endowed with a dazzling smile and a keen sense of funny, Debbie was raised and educated in Schenectady, New York. She graduated from Linton High School in 1974. Debbie continued her studies in Utica, New York, and graduated in 1978 from SUNYIT Utica/Rome with a degree in human services. She returned to Schenectady and, during the following thirty-seven years, was employed by Schenectady County.

Upon her retirement, Debbie was a senior case worker with the Department of Social Services’ Child Protective Services.

A member of a large family and known for her wide circle of friends, she was the life of the party. Debbie loved portraying Mrs. Santa during the holiday season, especially for disadvantaged children. Her smile and contagious laugh inspired everyone’s holiday spirit.

Debbie always told us there was a natural progression in her life toward the art of clowning. She knew and loved all the clowns in the area. As she watched some of them entertain her family members at various events, Debbie’s desire to become a clown was cultivated. She received her initial clown arts training through the Capital Region Clown Arts Festival. As she developed her character, “Snuggles,” she honed her sense of humor and entertained her scope of friends in comedic ways they never imagined.

Becoming an Ambassador of Joy, Snuggles joined Clowns of America International and the Electric City Clown Alley. Entertaining families, friends, and colleagues proved to be a pastime she genuinely loved.



THE LAST WALK-AROUND

David “Dr. Doofus” Cox

David Thomas Cox, age 77, died December 18, 2019. He was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, on August 8, 1942, to Roy and Evelyn Cox. David and his wife, Judy, who performed as “Lady-Bug,” moved to Melbourne, Florida, in 1970. He was a fishery biologist, working on the St. Johns River. He retired in 2004 from the Florida Wildlife Commission and then fulfilled his dream of being a clown and having a career in family entertainment. They



attended many conventions to learn how to entertain as clowns and magicians. Judy did face painting and David made balloon creations. They were both caring clowns. David’s most memorable training time was when he performed the “Hair Restorer” skit at Mooseburger Camp. David’s characters included “Duclnveed” and “Dan-Druff,” both clowns; “Cap’n Clyde” the pirate; “Dr. Doofus,” a caring clown; “Mr. Dave,” the balloonist and magician; and Santa. He loved working at Beef O’Brady’s and also at Uno’s Restaurant. His last gig was at Uno’s on Friday, December 13, 2019. Even though he didn’t feel well, he wanted to go and do what he did best—entertain! He and Judy were also members of the Space Coast Magic Club and learned much from John Anderson, the club president, and their fellow magicians. They graciously performed the very meaningful Broken Wand ceremony at his memorial service on December 30.

Gloria “Foo Foo” Rivers

Gloria “Foo Foo” Rivers, 91, of Wilmington, Delaware, died February 12. Gloria was born in Harlem, New York, and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was a mathematician who received her under-graduate degree from Morgan State University, where she was one of only three women studying mathematics amongst two hundred fifty men. She received graduate degrees from Johns Hopkins University and Temple University and worked as a teacher, statistician, and high school counselor.

Gloria was very involved with her church, Penn Memorial Baptist Church, in Philadelphia and enjoyed singing with the Clayton White Singers and many other groups. In 1996, Gloria was inspired to become a clown after attending a large celebration with her church which had only one clown, a Caucasian clown, to entertain seven hundred African American guests. She began her clown studies in Orlando, Florida, and continued with classes at Rowan University in New Jersey and in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Gloria enjoyed entertaining with her clown character, “Foo Foo.” She was a member of COAI and MACA.



Gloria was preceded in death by her parents and is survived by her brother, Rev. Curtiss P. Todd; a granddaughter, Jannielle Watson; three great-grandchildren, Justin, Markevis, and Antoinette Watson; three great-great grandchildren, Jaden, Jyuaire and Janyla Watson; cousins; and many friends.

I Love My COAI



By Teresa Gretton

In 1979, I began a new chapter in my life—clowning! I was a thirty-year-old mother with two children aged six and three, and I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I was living one of my deep desires—entertaining on the big stage and having a blast with my family of clowns! We joined Clowns of America to learn more about this art form and meet others going down the same track. I found it a consuming lifestyle. I was playing manager, makeup artist to three of us, and then, I was suddenly pregnant! That didn't slow me down, though. I was having so much fun watching my little ones entertain with us. Clowning was clearly becoming a huge part of our lives. Along came Baby B-B! We had Bunky, Blinky, Bertha, Binky, and Baby B-B, the Gretton Family of Clowns!

Let's fast forward to 1996. The phone rang one evening in August, and it was none other than Brenda Marshall, president of Clowns of America International (the newly formed organization). She needed to appoint someone as Secretary because Ruth Erkkila was vacating that position. It was a bittersweet request. It was sad that the much-beloved Ruth, a founding member of COAI, was leaving the position, and sweet that I would be appointed in her stead. I never felt I could fill her clown shoes, but I accepted, not having an idea what the position entailed other than minutes. I didn't even know how to copy information to a floppy disc back then.

I have sat on tremendous boards since then, beginning with the first one, known in some circles as the "New Kids on the Block." They were very smart, business oriented, savvy, and well known in the clown world, including Brenda Marshall, Cheri Venturi, Judy Quest, Walt Lee, Jack Anderson, Hunter Stevens, Dan Lake, Trudi Sang, Keith Stokes, Mike Fixer, Tricia Bothun, Joyce Olson, Andi Rothweiler, Gary Zwerin, Kay V. Henry, Linda Hulet, and Julio Capacetti. I was totally intimidated, but I believed in challenges. The excitement of hearing all their knowledge, recording it, setting up new programs, ushering in new ideas, and watching these clowns work so well together built my confidence and taught me more about clowning. They perhaps had to get used to reading my almost-verbatim minutes. (Can you believe it took thirty pages?) Eventually, I got them down to less paper and more important content.

I have had the honor of serving wonderful presidents of this great international clown organization from 1996-2010, under Brenda M, Judy Q, Cheri V, Paul K, Tom K, and Pam B. From 2010-2018, I changed positions to serve as the Membership Director under Glenn Kohlberger's presidencies. In 2018, I figured my time on boards was nearing an end. Mike Cox and I had been together on



Top: Bunky and Blondi during their tour with Cole Bros. Circus.
Bottom: The Gretton Family of Clowns consisted of Bunky, Blinky, Bertha, Binky, and Baby B-B.

the board of directors for many years, and I felt I needed to serve one more year as secretary for COAI under his leadership.

Here I am, twenty-four years later, at the close of an incredible experience serving the board and members. It is hard to let go of this part of my life. I absolutely love my COAI. I am left with many wonderful memories, serving with unbelievable clowns, making decisions (some good, some not so good) in the world of COAI, whose mission is to educate clowns. I thank Brenda for asking me in 1996 and all the presidents and board members who have put up with me. What will I do now? Keep up my clowning with Bunky and look forward to another chapter in my book of life. **TNC**

CLOWN COMICS

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

By Ann "Tuttles" Sanders

★ Stage Manager: Harold "Ducky" Wood. Starring: Ann "Tuttles" Sanders, Kathy "Sparkles" McPherson, Jeremy "Dilly" Manning, Jerry "Dr. Dufus" Dodson, Evelyn "Giggles" Smith, and Courtney "Dally" Harris. Kolonial Klowns of Williamsburg – Alley #357

Photos by Tim "Sawdust" Laynor



Great Magic

for Children's Entertainers!

WING IT!



SHOW A FOLDER WITH A COLORFUL PICTURE of a farm house and barnyard. Open it up, and YIKES! The farmer is still asleep, the alarm clock is broken, and the cranky old rooster is nowhere to be found! All of the other farm animals are waiting to be fed, but the farmer is snoozing away, and the rooster will have to come back to wake him up.

What happened to the rooster? Show the animal cards—cow, lamb, duck, pig, dog, and the rooster—all in bright colors on heavy-duty, glossy cards. The rooster decides to take a day off and vanishes completely! Will he come back? Yes! When the

rooster pops out from behind the farmhouse folder, unknown to you, it's the famous look-don't-see formula in living color! The kids will be wild with delight as the rooster peeks over the top, hides again, and peeps out from side to side.

We guarantee it's everything it's quacked up to be. There'll be no beef about it, and the kids will howl with glee. You never sausage a trick because we made it just for ewe! It's something to crow about!

- Hilarious kid-show comedy!
- Beautiful artwork by Selina Frederick!
- Full color, highly visible cards measure
- 8 x 10½ inches!

\$45



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Bringing Out the Better Performer in You

Learn formulas for becoming an outstanding performer, based on the advice and techniques of some of the finest entertainers in magic. This book helps you profit from their experience. This book will help you capitalize on your strengths and develop your latent talents.

Only \$10

THE NEW BOOKWORM



Only \$45

A terrific educational effect which promotes reading and creates hysteria among children!

The performer shows a folder with a picture of a library on the front. Inside the "library" are books, a table and lamp for reading, and... and... and...oops—no Bob the Book Worm! Maybe he's hiding behind some books.

Meantime, the folder is laid aside, and the performer shows five giant cards depicting different kinds of books and stories you can find at the library—fairy tales, history, adventure, geography, how-to books, and—wait!—here he is!—Bob the Book Worm!

But Bob is a tricky fellow, and before you know it, he has disappeared and his card is completely blank! Where is he? The kids guess, you guess, but nobody can find him until he makes his surprise reappearance which leaves children hoarse and gasping as you and Bob the Book Worm take a bow.



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