

THE NEW CALLIÖPE

For Members of Clowns of America International

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KYNISHA “DAISY THE CLOWN” DUCRE



A HEART FULL OF GRATITUDE

By Rose Cardenas

Kynisha “Daisy the Clown” Ducre became a clown because she has a heart to serve others. She is continually inspired by the poem, “A Clown’s Prayer,” a version of which is printed on the back of COAI’s membership card. Kynisha says she seeks to share joy with her audiences with a heart and skills that please God with her hard work. She says she “wears a lot of gratitude,” and this comes across in her clowning. She is inspired by the Bible verse, Colossians 3:23, which says, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.”

Kynisha has more than twenty years of clowning experience and has received the COAI Excellence in Clowning Award and the WCA Humanitarian Award, amongst other awards. She has now returned to serve on the COAI board as the Director of Conventions.

Kynisha got her start in clowning in her high school theater class, though a childhood as an only child with her stuffed animals as companions and puppets set her on a path of creative arts. The variety of skills that she developed, including music, dance, and magic, are a perfect combination to enhance her clown performances. In addition, a summer job as an escort for the blind developed her skills of using words to paint pictures of the world for those who couldn’t see.

After earning a degree in psychology, Kynisha realized that she would take what she learned in a different direction as an interior designer to create calming spaces for mental stability. Although she continues to work full-time as a designer—now with Google—she also has the flexibility to allow her to devote a significant amount of time to her clowning.

As the new Director of Conventions, Kynisha is excited to find ways to attract youth to clowning and make clowning relatable to a new generation. She seeks to take new directions in marketing, such as TikTok and Facebook, increase the diversity in convention workshop options, and move beyond what is expected of a clown. Kynisha wants to develop an atmosphere in the COAI in which everyone is ready to put a hand out to pull others up. However, that demands that clowns value others without judgment and without regard to race, gender, or age, and are willing to accept those who may not be the typical clown of the past. When she started out, African American clowns were not common, and not all clowns were very accepting. Kynisha had to learn a lot on her own, though she’s quick to remember those who readily accepted her. Both clowns with many years of experience and those who are new to the art

have value and knowledge to contribute. She says, “I know I did it without others’ help, but because of that, I was free to be myself and learn without judgment.”

Kynisha has the desire to increase the relevance and knowledge of clowns in today’s world. Some clowns earn the majority of their income from children’s birthday parties. For these clowns to remain relevant, they must keep current with today’s cartoons, Disney movies, and popular characters. In addition, many children have missed out on previous opportunities to interact with clowns because of the years of Covid.



Daisy visits the library.



Kynisha "Daisy the Clown" Ducre has recently been appointed COAI Director of Conventions.

Young children have probably never seen a clown before and come from a different perspective than kids of that age in the past. With the return to a more normal life, these children can have the joy of an introduction to the magic of clowning.

Kynisha is a "forever student," always seeking to improve and learn new skills

and knowledge. She is a high achiever who seeks to deliver a high-end product at every performance. She says, "I want to make sure I'm good." One result of this is her desire to continually add new shows to her repertoire. Daisy the Clown now has a balloon show, and a new bubble show is being created. She has enjoyed

working with Axtell puppets and is learning more about ventriloquism.

Kynisha also values sharing her clowning internationally. She has performed in thirty-seven countries on six continents. Her shows with balloon twisting, face painting, puppetry, and magic have been performed for those who have never seen anything like that before. Last summer, Kynisha performed in Zimbabwe, where the children had never seen crayons before. Her simple magic tricks amazed her audience, and she was taken to the tribal leader so he too could share in the amazement. Kynisha frequently travels with Dr. Patch Adams and is also involved in The Balloon Build, which will be in the UK at Christmas this year. She enjoys combining her love of travel with her desire to share positive messages with her audiences, wherever they are.

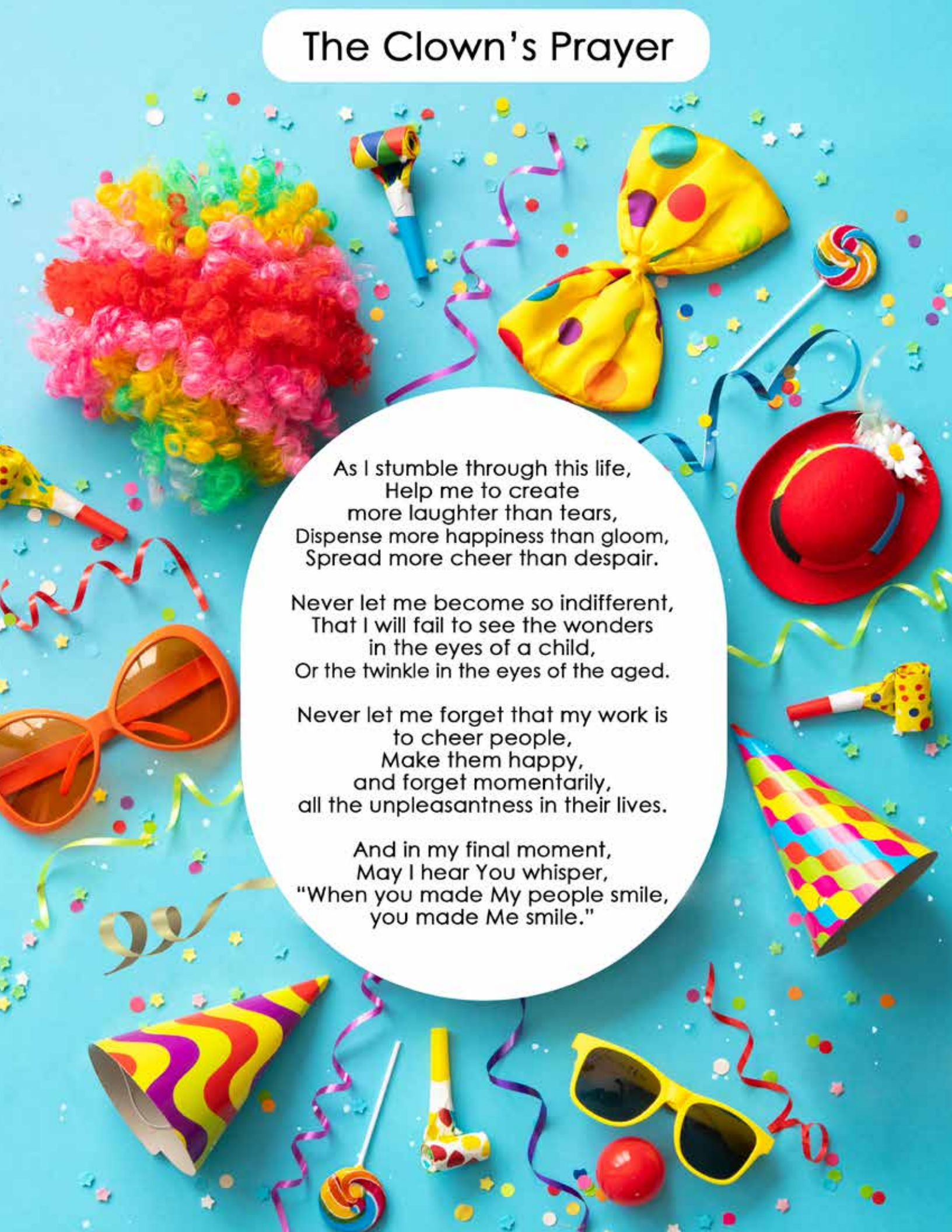
In addition to these projects, Kynisha has also been busy with various multimedia projects. She recently published her first book, *Create in Me*, a Christian balloon twisting book. This interactive book has instructions for sixteen balloon creations (such as a firefighter and cheerleader), each with three songs and Bible verses, as well as a QR code for YouTube video instructions. An equipment kit is also available. She has collaborated on two recent documentaries, one with David Arquette which includes footage of last year's COAI Convention. In addition, she has been working on a Daisy the Clown doll which she hopes will go into mass production. Kynisha appreciates that these projects will allow her to reach a broader audience, though she doesn't want to exhaust herself with entrepreneurial efforts.

Kynisha has faced many challenges as Daisy the Clown has become a high-quality performer. However, Kynisha is inspired by her love of God and the gratitude she has. She has a message that she wants to share, and she is willing to overcome the obstacles that are in her way. Her focus is to "make every day magical!" **TNC**



Left: Working with Patch Adams. Right: Have show, will travel!

The Clown's Prayer



As I stumble through this life,
Help me to create
more laughter than tears,
Dispense more happiness than gloom,
Spread more cheer than despair.

Never let me become so indifferent,
That I will fail to see the wonders
in the eyes of a child,
Or the twinkle in the eyes of the aged.

Never let me forget that my work is
to cheer people,
Make them happy,
and forget momentarily,
all the unpleasantness in their lives.

And in my final moment,
May I hear You whisper,
"When you made My people smile,
you made Me smile."

33 Things Children Enjoy

By David Ginn

The key to entertaining kids is to understand what they like, what makes them laugh, and what holds their interest.

With that in mind, allow me to share with you nine more things that children enjoy in my comedy magic shows, and hopefully in yours—magic, clowning, or otherwise. (This is my second article on this topic. If you want to read my first nine tips, I recommend checking out my earlier article in the series.)

The more you include these elements in your show, the more that children will enjoy the show *and* you. Keep in mind that children enjoying you—and having fun themselves—go hand in hand. At the same time that you're entertaining everyone in the room (including yourself!), you can convince more people to employ you for their parties and events at schools, libraries, church pre-schools, picnics, and other kidrelated or family functions.

Study this list to see how it applies to you and your performance. Here are my next nine tips for entertaining children, in no particular order:

10. Running Gag. Take repetition a step further and make it a running gag. The easiest way is to try to do something in your act, but fail rather than succeed. Each time you fail, react in some way to build the repetition. I like to dramatically comment, "It never was a very good trick." After a few try-and-fail episodes, the kids start to say that line in unison with me. The repetitions become a running gag, which is the point. Of course, to complete the gag, I must finally make the trick work. I always do that in the last few moments of the show.

A favorite example: Toss a silk in the air while you announce that you will change it into a bird. I use a multicolored thumb-tip streamer. "It will be a beautiful tropical parrot." When I toss up the silk, it flutters down to my hand or the floor. I pause, then apologize by saying, "Well, it never was a very good trick." Later in the show, I repeat the toss up, this time pronouncing it will be a "rainbow trout." But it fails once more and, again, "It never was a very good trick!" By the third time, the kids are repeating the line with me, much to my delight, but I act perturbed and continue the show. Near the end of my performance, I decide to try it one more time, this time as a snake. "But it probably won't work, because, you know ... it never was a very good trick." Then I toss a duplicate streamer with an appearing cane attached, and the cane opens in mid-air.

"Look!" I shout. "It's *petrified!*" Using this try-and-fail technique, you can create your own running gag. Just do what appears to be the same thing again and again,



and use some dramatic or funny words to mislead the children. Then, at last, let the magic happen.

11. Animals. Need I tell you what Walt Disney learned over seventy-five years ago? Children love animals. Pictures of animals, toy animals, stuffed animals, live animals. It will be a big "plus" with the kids if you insert any kind of animal trick into your show. Years ago, magician Duke Stern told me that he was allergic to rabbits. That's why he made his animal effect the Abbott's Snake Basket, which uses a mechanical snake to find a selected card. Did Duke get entertainment mileage out of that! I personally opt for a live rabbit in my shows. The moment I switched, in 1977, from doves to a real rabbit, it was like night and day. Some children are afraid of birds, but not rabbits! With little kids, once you produce the rabbit you're crazy if you try to do any more magic tricks—the rabbit is more interesting than you are, which means the show is over!

One day I counted my rabbit tricks in the basement. I had seventeen productions and four vanishes. That tells you something. And I'll share something else with you, about which I have changed my mind: I no longer vanish a rabbit at a Kidshow without bringing it back.



HOW-TO

This does not mean I won't use a rabbit vanish in a show. It only means that if I do, I'll use another to bring Mr. Bunny back into audience view.

12. Incongruity. Basically, something is not quite right. Something is out of the ordinary. It's a clever way to make people, and especially kids, laugh. One of my writing professors in college said incongruity was the most important element in comedy writing. I think it can also be extended to performance work. Magician friend Bobby Fay used to tell kids at a birthday party, "I had no trouble getting here. As I drove into the neighborhood, I saw what everybody expects to see on a birthday party mailbox—MASHED POTATOES!" Incongruent. They expected him to say balloons, but they got mashed potatoes instead. Totally incongruent.

Lead them down a figurative path. Then, veer left or right, up or down. Say or do the unexpected. Take out a deck of playing cards in a box. Open the box and pull out a rope. "What did you expect—a card trick?" Consider how you can use this in your shows. Maybe you're already using it without realizing that you are.

13. Use Adults. Believe me, children at schools love to see their teachers—even the principal or headmaster—brought on stage to help the act. Over the past seven or eight years, I have used over a thousand teachers on stage. I always make them look good and never embarrass them, usually turning the adult into the hero of the routine. In my Hawaii show, I dressed two teachers in hula skirts and leis (flower garlands), and performed the Mutilated Parasol. In my Alaska show, I pretended to send a teacher on a trip to Alaska and gave her all kinds of props to hold, while sharing educational facts about our forty-ninth state. Five years ago, I borrowed a teacher's shoe and pretended to accidentally burn it inside my shoe-cleaning invention. Kids

screamed with laughter because I acted like I had goofed and blamed the whole thing on the student who brought her shoe on stage. We eventually found the teacher's shoe in a nest of boxes.

Big hint: the best way to get teachers—or any adults—on stage is to ask the person in charge for the names of some adults who are guaranteed good sports. I write these names on a slip of paper kept atop my table, then use them like this: "For this next experiment, I need a helper who is a little taller, not even taller than the fifth graders—about as tall as Mrs. Thornton!" Electricity runs through the audience at the sound of the teacher's name. "That's my teacher," I often hear, and the kids point to her. Of course, this teacher often looks around to see who gave *me* her name! I even have teachers volunteering their friends to be in the new show each year! So don't be afraid to try this. I suggest you read the chapter on "Using Adults in Kidshows" in the *Creative KidTalk* book that I wrote with Sammy Smith and Steve Taylor.

14. Involvement. Kids love to be part of the show. I'm not talking about being on stage. Rather, I'm talking about shouting magic words, raising hands, chanting or singing, and other forms of group participation. Making kids feel involved will take them from "your" show to "our" show. I often have preschoolers hold up and wave their "magic wand fingers" while we shout the magic words. Get them involved from the moment you set foot on stage, even if the stage is a living room floor.

15. Say Funny Words. Use funny words during your show. I use magic words such as *Purple Puppy Chow*, *Liver Jello*, or *Okeefenokee Ishkeebibble* to create fun and laughter during my magic routines. Saying words that are "automatically funny" will get lots of laughs from the kids. My patter book *Laughter Legacy*, developed from Gene Gordon's comedy notebooks that he kept for nearly fifty



years, is packed full of automatically funny things to say during your routines. Ask a child helper on stage: "Do you have those little white things in your head that bite?" The kid will often reach for his hair and say, "NO!" Your reply? "What—you don't have teeth?"

16. Say It Funny. Say normal things in funny ways. You can drag out words as slow as possible or speak them rapid-fire. Or mix things up, as our minister Herb Outlaw used to do when he said, "He put the em-PHA-sis on the wrong syllable," by changing your pronunciation. Instead of calling those inflatable latex sculpture balloons, refer to them as BAA (pronounced like the sound a sheep makes) LOONS. Kids may correct you—in fact, they *love* to correct you—but act as if you don't understand what they're talking about. BAA-LOONS. Hey, it works for comedy!

17. Play Games. Kids love games. They love to play games and generally love the very idea of a game. So, play games during your show, or at least use the concept of a game. I often refer to a trick as a "game." It's sometimes a ruse or a ploy, or maybe it really is a game! Years ago, I used Supreme's Ring Toss trick in my preschool show. I let several children

toss six-inch rope rings at a wooden target with hooks. Then I tossed them all, saying I would make them *all* land on the hooks. Of course, the trick was that *my* rope rings ended up linked together, due to a clever switch of rings on the back of the target.

In my current school show, during a matching trick with two teachers and giant cards, I tell the audience's kids: "When I was your age, I used to play a certain card game. It's a game you've probably heard about and most of you have played. It's called GO FISH." Instant identity factor. Yes, they know the game; and yes, they've played it. "It's the game where you match up colored fish cards—the two reds, the two blues,

the two greens, and so forth. And you know what? I played that game so much as a kid, I could play it blindfolded or in the dark. And my wife is happy about that, because now, as a grown-up, I can match up my socks!" Teachers find that humorous. "Yes, I know that the yellow sock does not go with the red, or the purple with the pink. If I could just learn a game that would help me get the matched-up socks off my bed and into my drawer, my wife would really like that!" Play games.

18. Audience Participation. There are three types of audience participation. First, using the audience seated as a whole. Second, getting people on stage

with you. Third, using audience helpers while they are still in their seats (or at least in the audience). Use all three methods for a well-rounded show. Get some kids on stage to help during your show, even adults. Pick children from all over your audience, not just the front row. Also, select all types of kids: large, small, tall, short, different ages, different ethnicities, and other demographics. Bring children up and send them back with a round of applause. Always ask their names, even if you don't use them throughout the routine. This way, you identify them as people—not portable tables. **TNC**

(To be continued)

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From the Treasurer

Jerry Gill

What about My COAI Dues?

Is it still important to pay my dues during a year when we're not having a convention?

The truth is, your COAI dues have little or no relationship to the COAI Convention. Dues paid to COAI, like any other organization, are primarily used to sustain normal operations. In our case, this includes paying for the office telephone (and the person who answers it), the office mailbox, the COAI website, the Vault, Free Books in the Clown Cloud, and—yes—the greatest clown magazine out there, *The New Calliope*. Without your dues, those things simply cannot be sustained.

As members of any organization can attest, dropping any of these organizational benefits brings about a loss of membership from those who don't think they are getting their money's worth. This is complicated by the fact that members place importance on different membership benefits. It becomes a difficult dilemma for leadership to balance value and cost. Your COAI Board is doing the absolute best they can do right now, and we are continuing to offer all of the benefits we always have—and more.

So, what is the relationship between our conventions and dues? Conventions somehow always manage to get tied to dues. There is no correlation unless an organization has enough dues-paying members to generate excess revenue to build a convention fund. Short answer, we aren't there right now, and we haven't been for several years. Unfortunately, long before the pandemic, memberships began falling tremendously in all fraternal-type organizations, not just in our beloved clown organizations.

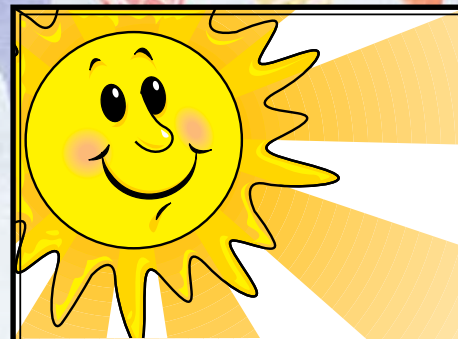
Then add to that the fact that conventions have always been expensive to produce—and since Covid, they are even more expensive. A hotel providing the conference and classrooms we need, with their food and beverage minimum charges and other add-on costs, normally requires an outlay of between \$15,000 and \$30,000 and a sizable non-refundable deposit. This is before adding the cost of instructors and a myriad of miscellaneous convention expenses. So the convention must be guaranteed to have registrations to cover these convention costs or the organization might face a default, which can spell the end for any organization. Nobody wants that!

So what can we do? Easy answer—spend a few bucks, pay our dues to keep COAI in business, and start planning to attend the COAI Convention in Niagara Falls next May—which we feel will be a convention to top all conventions in 2024. After all, it will be our fortieth anniversary!

To pay your dues, go to mycoai.com or call the COAI Business Office at 1-352-357-1676.

Then register for the 2024 COAI Convention at coaiconvention.com.

You'll be glad you did! **TNC**



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

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Not Just an Alley Clown

By Cheryl “Gabby” Arnold



I've been Gabby my whole life but a clown for thirty-three years. Before I attended a clown class, I went to the home of a friend who used to clown in college. She taught me basic clown makeup and gave me my clown name, although I don't really know the story behind why she chose it for me.

When I first joined Grease Paint Alley in Rochester, New York, there were so many clowns. Many different personalities, too—and not all of them got along well. That's why I almost didn't join. But then my friend, Judy “Bumpkin” Raymond, told me to just be myself and to ignore the negatives. I'm glad she did, because I had so much fun!

As time went by, things changed for the better and the alley became busier. We didn't do many close and personal events, just parades and festivals. I loved seeing the smiles we put on people's faces.

I later became the alley's board secretary. There were no computers at that time and everything had to be done by hand, but I didn't mind.

Eventually, I moved up to the office of alley president. I didn't know what I was doing, but thankfully the other board members did. We were very busy and started to add new skills and activities, including face painting. Our members and board are the reason why our alley is still doing so great.

As a clown, I almost always make my own costumes, even though I only know how to stitch straight. I liked the costumes I was creating until I went to my first convention, which was also my first “clown getaway” experience. When I saw the costumes on the other clowns, I thought my own costumes weren't that good anymore. I was thinking, “Yikes, these clowns are serious. I'm just an alley clown. Why can't I do more?”

Fortunately, my next convention was a better experience. It was fun spending time with my fellow alley clowns who were able to attend with me. Once again, I noticed the fancy costumes on the other clowns and thought I was still way out of my league. “I'm just a basic clown who does basic balloons and basic facepainting,” I thought to myself. “I'm just an alley clown.”

Then I went to the American Clown Academy. It was a long drive but we made it. I had great roommates and great food. (Well, it was “okay” food, but at least I didn't have to cook three times a day!). ACA had people of all ages and the costumes weren't as elaborate as the ones I'd seen at conventions. I felt like I could finally be myself.

Like me, everyone at ACA was still learning how to clown and entertain. I still noticed many people who were learning how to clown for their business, while I was an

alley clown. “Well, I'm going to change that,” I thought to myself.

When I went home I told my alley that I was leaving them. I was going to move on and do what I wanted. For a couple of days, I moped around the house while my hubby told me to call back the alley. My daughter told me to do the same thing. “I'm going out to do more stuff,” I replied. I made funny looking costumes and prayed a lot. But what did I really want?

That's when I realized that I had already been doing exactly what I wanted—at the alley I had just left behind!

As an alley clown, I wasn't able to donate money. But I could share my time with charities. I raised \$600 for one by shaving my head. Yes, thankfully the alley let me come back!

My alley is my happy place and I love my clown family very much. That's how I realized that I'm not “just an alley clown.” I'm a loving, caring clown who gives herself to others to make a difference in their lives. Being in an alley doesn't make me, or other alley clowns, any less of a clown than the ones who do it for a living.

I have more thoughts jumbling around in my brain, but I'll spare you—for now! I love all the people I have met through clowning, and I pray that we can all love and respect other clowns and entertainers just the way they are. **TNC**

JUNIOR JOEYS

By Regina “Cha Cha” Wollrabe,
Junior Joeys Director



Let’s make bubbles! Even the word itself, “bubbles,” feels and looks like bubbles to me. These beautiful, floating bubbles are some of the happiest things I remember as a small child, and I still smile every time I see them. There are many ways to play or perform with bubbles of all sizes, and we clowns have many opportunities to incorporate them in what we do. We hope that you’ll buy or create bubble juice and bring a bucketful of fun to you and your audience.

Sara Kreutz, one of the Regional Vice Presidents on the COAI board, wrote a bubble article that was published on page 24 of the July/August 2016 issue of *The New Calliope*. Her article included this easy bubble-making recipe (shown below), which is quite forgiving if your measurements are not exact. There are many different recipes you can try on the soap bubble wiki, soapbubble.fandom.com/wiki/Recipes_Guar.

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon of guar gum powder. (Bob’s Red Mill is a well-known brand and can be found either online or in the health food aisle of your local grocery store.)
- 2 tablespoons of rubbing alcohol. You can use a variety of proofs, from 70% to 90%, although for this recipe I haven’t found much difference between them.
- 15 cups of warm tap water. Warm water helps to hydrate the guar faster. Hot water, straight from the tap, has worked fine for me as well. If your hot water is turned down very low, you may want to heat your water on the stove, but do not heat it to a boiling point.
- ½ cup plus 4 tablespoons of Dawn Professional Pots and Pans Manual dish soap. You may be able to find this locally at Sam’s Clubs or janitor supply shops. My favorite online dealer is cleanitsupply.com.
- 2 teaspoons of baking powder.



Photos: istock



Directions:

Add first two ingredients together in a small cup. Stir until dissolved.

Add this slurry mixture to your hot water, then stir. The guar will begin to hydrate and may float on the surface. That is okay—just continue to periodically stir.

Next, add the soap.

Add the baking powder last, but wait until the mixture has somewhat cooled before you add it. It will foam.

Once you add the baking powder, a white layer will settle at the bottom of the solution. Don’t worry about trying to stir it back into the mixture.

This bubble juice can sit overnight (cover with a towel or light cloth) to allow it to age, but it can also be used as soon as it’s mixed.

Guar-based solutions do not keep for extended lengths of time. Once this solution has been used, it will not last long. It ages quickly and will become unusable. Aging can be slowed by storing it in the refrigerator or a cool place.

Add slightly more, or less, soap to create different rates of dilution. The dilution rate may affect how the bubbles look, as well as how the solution performs in your environment.

Once you learn how to make a good soap solution, there’s no limit to the fun bubbles you can create! **TNC**



BEGINNING SKILLS IN BUBBLES

Doing bubble tricks and making giant bubbles are fun to do with an audience. We hope that trying this activity will inspire you to grow another skill that can bring fun and laughter to the world you live in. Try four out of the seven tricks to earn this pin. Sara Kreutz, who inspired this pin, is happy to answer any bubble questions you may have. Write to her at sarakreutz@yahoo.com.

- Make or buy your own bubble solution.
- Watch a video about Tom Noddy doing bubble tricks.
- Make a bubble using your hand.
- Blow a bubble inside another bubble.
- Combine two bubbles into one.
- Try to combine three or more bubbles together.
- Put your finger or hand through a bubble without popping it.
- Make a bubble foamer with coffee stir sticks. Make a crown.
- Make or buy a tri-string wand to make large bubbles.
- Launch a large bubble with the tri-string.

Parent/Jr. Joey Leader Signature: _____

Date: _____



Parades

By Jim "Donuts" Donoughe

I hope we have all started planning for Clown Week, but I digress—that's not until August 1–7.

This time we're talking parades!

Like all things, we need to plan ahead. Parades of all kinds are happening in the summer, not just during the holidays. Towns celebrate all sorts of things. There's a Lilac Festival in New York, a Garlic Fest in California, and even a Chicken Fest in the Midwest. Parades are a clever way to have fun, so they are commonly associated with festivals. Clowns bring fun and something different to a parade and are a welcome treat. The Chamber of Commerce or city hall will have information on upcoming parades and festivals, along with a list of sponsors. Joining a parade is easy. Just reach out to organizers from past events and tell them you would like to participate. Typically, it requires nothing more than filling out the participant form and turning it in for approval. This also allows the audience to get to know you and your alley.

For the alley or parade group, work on safety all year long, not just during the summer months. Have a parade boss who is in charge of a small first aid kit with Band-Aids, aspirin, and safety pins for quick repair to a costume. Your group will also need extra water or electrolyte solution. Have each participant fill out a 3" x 5" card with emergency contacts, health alerts, and cell phone number in case you need to contact them. These cards can be sealed in an envelope for privacy if that's a concern. If someone falls, becomes ill, or gets heat exhaustion, you will need this information, especially if an ambulance is involved. The parade boss should keep these items in a bag and be responsible for them. If the alley is using a vehicle or a wagon, these supplies can be kept there, close at hand.

Be on time for the lineup. There is nothing worse than trying to join a parade that is already on the move. Being late will also harm your reputation with the organizers.

Make sure your group has transportation back to the starting point. If you have walked a long parade route, you may not have the energy to walk back to the starting area.

Parades happen all year long, but particularly in the summer months, we need to prepare more for the walking and the heat. It's very important to stay hydrated. Drink extra water the day before the parade. Even if you live in air conditioning, drink water. Drink more the day of the parade, during the parade (if possible), and when it's over. Gatorade or Pedalyte is always a good boost after. Stay hydrated or risk heat stroke or exhaustion.

Dress for the weather. Those heavy cotton costumes may be great when it's cold, but when it's hot, they're not. Try lighter weight costume pieces. For example, try a vest instead of a heavy jacket. Wear loose fitting pants or shorts. Ladies can wear a flowy skirt without the petticoats or frills to allow more airflow during the parade. Try a fun hat if you worry about your wig being too hot.

Consider your physical fitness and that of other members. How long is the parade route? Can you walk it in your clown shoes, or should you opt for sneakers? Should you ride in a car, instead? Know your limitations. If possible, exercise by taking walks each day to build up your stamina so you are ready for those longer parades. It's

always better to walk than ride in a car, if possible. If vehicles must be used, vans are good because clowns can ride with the back doors open for better visibility to the spectators. Check out the route to see if it is flat or hilly. These conditions can change your planning, as well.

If a vehicle is used for a longer parade route, consider assigning shifts or rotating out of the vehicle to accommodate everyone. Make sure you have clear signs so the spectators know who you are.

Always consider safety first. This is something that cannot be stressed enough. Be cautious and aware of your surroundings during a parade. Moving vehicles and floats can't easily maneuver around the parade route, so watch your step as you walk. When riding in a car, make sure the driver is aware of passengers getting in and out of the vehicle. We don't want someone getting hurt by jumping out of a moving car.

Next, consider the entertainment. These are not skits! You must do a quick visual or gag and move on. You need to keep the parade moving as you entertain. Clowns blowing bubbles, walking around with puppets, and walking an invisible dog on a leash work well. Audience participation opportunities also work well. When the parade stops or hits a slow point, have a contest to see which side of the street can cheer the loudest. A clown starts with one side of the street while a second clown gets the other side cheering. This can go back and forth before a winning side is announced. It's entertaining and helps keep everyone happy and entertained.

When working with props, remember they need to be lightweight, as well. You will be carrying them the whole way. Have a back-up plan for the weather. There's nothing worse than carrying a lightweight prop that is ten pounds heavier when it's raining.

Most of all, have fun! With these parade tips, you and your alley members will be well prepared for the next parade.

TNC

25 Years go

By Lauren Jurgensen

It's not surprising that one of the poster children of clown makeup—Jim “Strutter” Roberts, author of the beloved *Strutter's Complete Guide to Clown Makeup*—was selected to grace the cover of the March/April 1998 issue of *The New Calliope*.

In an interview, Jim discussed his other works (*Jack Tales*, *Funniest Rope Routine in the World*, *Strutter's Guide to Balloon Routines*), his recent appointment as Chair of COAI's International Clown Week, and how one of his career highlights was the time he performed for children at hospitals in Poland and the former Soviet Union. “Children are the same throughout the world,” he said. “Regardless of what language they speak, they show their delight with laughter—and that's a universal language.”

Much of the issue was understandably dedicated to profiles for the twenty-two candidates running for office in COAI's upcoming 1998 biennial election, but there were several standout columns worth revisiting.

Lee “Juggles” Mullally covered best practices for using more props and gags at parade events. This included some great practical advice for applying comedy techniques like irony and puns, as well as for using third-arm, second-person, and squirting props. “A third-arm prop is very useful,” wrote Mullally. “Barry ‘Bonzo’ DeChant of Livonia, MI, uses a third-arm prop and a squirting prop as a walkaround ring gag that would be an excellent parade prop. He carries a large book of ‘Sad Stories’ and then squirts water that appears to originate from his eyes.” Speaking of squirting props, “it's very important to squirt the water so it can be seen but not felt by your audience. Moving the prop from side to side will enable the audience to see the water from various angles,” he explained.

In “Adjusting our Focus,” David “Mr. Rainbow” Bartlett urged COAI members to avoid becoming too complacent about the organization's objectives and approach to clown performance—skits notwithstanding. “I can't help but feel that, as an organization, our focus is a little fuzzy at times ... we have to stand for something, and I want that something to be as broad and inclusive as possible,” he wrote. “But I also think there needs to be a base of what defines us. I think it should be, at the very least, an understanding that clowning is a *performance* art grounded firmly in comedy. Stated that way, I don't think I'd get much argument.”

David then proposed a solution that he hoped would encourage better performances (and a stronger sense of community) from fellow joeys. “What if each COAI alley were required to procure a public performance hall and perform a clown show for general audiences each August to coincide with International Clown Week? It's not a bad idea. Imagine what this would do ... [it would] give alleys a real focus. So many alleys simply exist, and their main goal is to continue existing. Under this requirement, alleys would clearly know what they have to do with new members. They have to get them ready for a real performance in front of their own local community.”

Meanwhile, clown columnist Karen “Peppermint” Reinholt explored the importance of respecting children's boundaries and agency during their most impressionable years. “If a clown frightens [a child] by being too loud or aggressive, this fear can also last them a lifetime. Remember this around the little ones who are timid and shy. Give them their space and be gentle in your voice not too aggressive in your actions,” Karen



advised. “When this happens, I will stop approaching and say something like, ‘It's okay, sweetie, sometimes I even scare myself!’ The parents will chuckle at this statement and the child visibly relaxes at their parent's reaction.”

A column by Dr. Bugg (Chuck Rinkel) shared his “Four Cardinal Rules” for clowns who bring cheer to residents of hospitals and nursing homes. His first rule? Always call to get the hospital or nursing home's permission first—common sense, but it's the polite thing to do. Next, remember that you are a guest of the facility and they don't owe you anything for showing up. “I have been surprised once in a great while at the arrogance of a joey when visiting and clowning in a hospital/nursing home ... thankfully, this is the rare exception.” Dr. Bugg's third rule echoes his first: always ask the patient if you have permission to enter their room. The fourth, and final Cardinal Rule is that loud or boisterous clown characters should subdue those qualities when performing at a care facility. “Some of my most joyful, happy, and meaningful visits have been moments of quiet.”

As always, these long-ago articles still offer a bounty of wisdom and practical advice for the discerning clown. I hope you'll take advantage of The Vault's back issues at our website www.mycoai.com. Bump a nose! **TNC**

Richard Snowberg

December 23, 1941 – March 19, 2023

A Tribute

By Bruce “Charlie” Johnson

Richard Snowberg was widely known for his important leadership role in the World Clown Association, but he was also a proud member of Clowns of America International.

Richard began clowning in 1975. He joined the original Clowns of America organization and attended the 1979 COA convention in Chicago, Illinois before lecturing at the 1981 COA convention in Delavan, Wisconsin. He credited the clowns he met at those conventions for helping him to learn about the art of clowning and often spoke about the importance of friendships that he made there.

Richard started Clown Camp in 1981 and directed the program for thirty years. Following a hiatus, he directed it for an additional year before turning it over to Kenny Ahern. More than five thousand participants from around the world have studied at one of the Clown Camp programs.

He became lifelong friends with Betty Cash after meeting her through Clowns of America. When Richard started Clown Camp, Betty was one of the five guest instructors he invited to be part of the program. Betty had the most extensive Clown Camp staff experience and was a staff member every year through 2009. At times, there was more than one week of instruction, with as many as four one-week programs in succession. Betty and Richard liked to joke about her spending a year in La Crosse, Wisconsin, the home of Clown Camp. Betty was on staff for more than fifty-two one-week programs.

When the original Clowns of America organization disbanded, Betty Cash played a vital role in creating the new Clowns of America International. Richard became a charter member of COAI. In recognition of her service to COAI, Betty was chosen as the first Clowns of America International Clown of the Year.

Richard frequently included other COAI leaders on the Clown Camp staff. He gave them the opportunity to promote COAI membership.

Brenda Marshall was a Clown Camp staff member in 1994. Cal Olsen, former editor of *The New Calliope*, visited Clown Camp that year. It was announced that he was there to write an article about Clown Camp to be published in *The New Calliope*. He did write an article, but that was not his real reason for being there.



Lee Mullally, Bruce Johnson, Carole Johnson, Richard Snowberg, Jan Snowberg, Don Burda, and Jim Howle.



Richard Snowberg as Junior. PHOTO BY MERILYN BARRETT

Richard and Cal had a secret. Before a show one morning, Richard introduced Cal. Cal announced that Brenda Marshall had just become the first woman to be elected Clowns of America International's President. Brenda was not expecting that announcement and had not known until that moment that she had won.

Cheri Venturi is another COAI Past President who was a member of the Clown Camp staff.

Recognizing that everyone could not take a week off and travel to La Crosse to attend Clown Camp, Richard began the weekend Clown Camp on the Road programs. These programs were held throughout the United States and Betty Cash was sometimes a member of the small staff. In the late 1980s, Betty was on staff for a Clown Camp on the Road program in Sacramento, California. She asked me to join her to perform some clown skits during a class that she taught.

During the closing session for every Clown Camp on the Road program, Richard would invite a representative of each local alley to talk about their group and invite participants to their next meeting. That led to many people joining COAI alleys. My wife became a COAI member and joined the Cascade Clowns after attending a Clown Camp on the Road program.



Richard Snowberg performing an interactive routine with a balloon. PHOTO BY MERILYN BARRETT

Richard's leadership extended beyond the World Clown Association and Clown Camp. He was an original member of the International Clown Hall of Fame Board of Directors. He remained on the board, helping to shape the organization until 2000.

Richard influenced more than just the people who met him in person. When he began clowning, there was little available literature on the subject. To fill the gap, Richard wrote six books. The oldest Richard Snowberg book that I have in my collection is *Just Clowning Around with Magic*. The title page identifies it as the lecture notes for his presentation at the 1981 Clowns of America convention. It was common for magicians to sell publications containing information that they had included in a lecture, but in the 1980s it was rare for a clown instructor to provide such material.

Over the next few years, Richard continued to publish new books. He wrote *Clowning for Children*, *Just for Laughs Clown Routines*, and *Clowning Wherever You Can*. In 1985, he published *The Clown in You: A Basic Textbook* and included an acknowledgments section in

which he thanked Betty Cash for being a content consultant.

When Richard began clowning in 1975, he was the only clown in La Crosse. His wife Jan, along with their two sons, soon appeared beside him as fellow clowns.

He also began teaching clown classes. When students graduated from his classes, they still wanted to get together. Richard responded by starting the Coulee Clown Club, which partnered with a local hospital to begin a program called *Clowns on Call*. The hospital would call them if a patient was in the hospital on their birthday. A member of the club would visit and perform a party for them. The hospital would also call if they felt a patient needed humor to lighten their mood. Richard said he noticed that the clowns really were not sure about what to do in a hospital setting. He observed the same thing in other hospital clown programs. He felt some kind of training should be offered for clowns in hospital and nursing home settings, and decided to research a new field that he referred to as "caring clowning."

In 1992, Richard published *The Caring Clowns: How Humor, Smiles, and Laughter Overcome Pain, Suffering, and Loneliness*. His book inspired many clowns. It also gave the caring clown specialty more credibility. When Carole, my wife, approached Stevens Hospital in Edmonds, Washington, about working there as a clown, the Director of Volunteers was skeptical at first. When Carole showed her Richard's book, she decided there might be some validity to having a clown visit the hospital. The Director of Volunteers was not a clown herself but eventually attended Clown Camp to learn more about therapeutic humor.

Richard added caring clowning leaders to the Clown Camp staff. They provided classes on the topic every year.

Richard helped found the Wishland Pony Express, a wish-granting organization in La Crosse for children with chronic or life-threatening medical conditions. He later became associated with Give Children the World in Orlando, Florida and gave me the opportunity to perform there several times.

Richard understood the challenge of dealing with medical conditions. He fought several during his lifetime. In the



Betty Cash.

INSPIRATION AND HUMOR

late 1980s, a medical condition caused him to lose all of his body hair and he wore a toupee for a while. During make-up demonstrations he loved the reaction when he announced, "Now I have to do something that most of you do not." There were many gasps when he removed his toupee and put on a baseball cap.

Richard's original clown character was a Whiteface named Snowflake.

In 1990, he created a classic Whiteface character with a spangled costume. He wore it during a clown convention. People kept sneaking up behind him trying to figure out how he hid the edge of his skull cap. He was not wearing one. Since he was bald, he simply applied white makeup to his entire head.

Eventually, he had to retire his Whiteface character because a medical condition prevented him from applying makeup near his eyes. He could no longer produce tears and had to rely on eye drops. Jim Howle helped Richard design an Auguste character that would hide the lack of makeup near his eyes. He called his new character Junior.

In recognition of his leadership through caring clowning, Richard was invited to attend the 1993 World Clown Congress in Harnosand, Sweden, where they declared him a VIP. They also granted Richard an all-access ticket that admitted him to every event.

I was at the Congress to lecture on the history of American clowning as well as to represent the US in the International Gala Show. It was a pleasure spending time with Richard and seeing him interact with others throughout the trip.

Dr. Marti Palermo, a physician from Helsinki, Finland, spoke about the link between humor and physical health. Dr. Raymond Moody, a psychiatrist from the United States, spoke about the link between humor and mental health. Richard had several conversations with both presenters about therapeutic humor.

There were only four lecturers at the Congress. The fourth one was Victor Vladimirov, the Director of the Moscow



Above: Richard Snowberg as Junior. PHOTO BY MERILYN BARRETT Right: Richard Snowberg as Snowflake. PHOTO BY ROGER GRANT

State Circus College. Victor did not speak English. The Congress provided a Russian translator so that Richard and Victor could trade ideas about clown education.

The Mayor of Harnosand hosted a special dinner for local dignitaries and the four lecturers. Richard was issued a special invitation to join that meal in a historic lighthouse.

Knick Pang, a clown in Singapore who was the Director of Circus Outreach, and Richard Snowberg organized the 2004 Clown-Around-The-World Festival in Singapore. I had the privilege of being part of that group. We performed a series of ten shows in a wonderful theater to raise money for a group of local charities.

There were four days of classes. We taught two days of classes devoted to the use of humor in education. The other two days were devoted to the use of humor in healthcare settings.

In addition, members of the group did public outreach appearances. Everyone performed in a large church. Lee Mullally from the US, along with RONE and Gigi from Japan, performed in a prison. Richard invited me to accompany him on a visit to the Singapore University Hospital. At the time, caring clowning was a new concept in Singapore. Some local clowns, who were out of their makeup and costumes, observed us as we made our rounds. As a result, a very successful caring clown program began at another hospital in Singapore. That program is still thriving.



Again, our efforts were officially recognized. Halfway through the week, members from the American Consulate, Japanese Consulate, and British High Command attended our stage shows. On the last evening, Singapore's president S.R. Nathan attended our show with his family and grandchildren.

In addition to making his own contributions to our art, Richard encouraged and assisted others to contribute as well. He started his own company, Visual Magic, to publish his books. Visual Magic published *Comedy Techniques for Entertainers*, which was my first book. Most of his support was a quiet, behind-the-scenes effort. I know of some of them because Richard enlisted my help. I know of others because the recipient told me. Shobi Dobi said that she would not have started publishing *The Hospital Clown Newsletter* without Richard's encouragement. I am sure that Richard made other efforts of which I am not aware.

Richard was often so busy administering educational programs that he had little opportunity to perform himself. Some of his performances were not seen by the other clowns. For example, sometimes during a Clown Camp on the Road program, Richard would invite me

to join him in thanking the hotel staff by doing a show for their families. Those shows were not listed on the educational schedule and the only people in attendance were connected to the hotel.

I had the privilege and pleasure of seeing Richard perform many times over the years.

He had a walkaround routine that I loved. When he saw a child with freckles, he would pull a small autograph book out of his pocket. He would explain that it was his freckle collection. He would show the child pages filled with dots. Each dot had a signature next to it. Then he would ask the child if he could have one of their freckles. He pretended to pull one of their freckles off their face and add it to a page in the book. He would point to a dot and tell the child that is their freckle. Then he would ask them to sign his book next to their freckle.

Richard had a wonderful interactive performance style on stage. First, he would introduce a task (such as opening an umbrella or inflating a balloon). After expressing doubt about how it is done, he would invite three or four volunteers to help him on stage. (He explained that he would bring up several children just in case one turned out to be shy and would not say anything.) He would explain to his helpers that he wanted to learn how to do the task by himself. Their job was to give him instructions, but not to do it for him. Then he would try to follow their instructions. However, he always misunderstood and did something wrong. If a child started to reach for the object he was holding, he would turn towards them, shake their hand, and ask "How do you do?" Then he would turn towards the children on his other side and continue with his struggles. The kids on stage with him would usually begin to giggle. He could sometimes get five to eight hilarious minutes out of one simple task.

I saw him perform one of his interactive routines in the amphitheater at the

World Expo in Nagoya, Japan. RONE translated for him. It worked wonderfully despite the fact that the language barrier caused a delay.

A complete description of one of his interactive routines, trying to inflate a balloon, is included in *Clowning for Children*.

During a 1991 Clown Camp on the Road program in Phoenix, Arizona, Earl Chaney had several rubber roasted pig props for sale on his dealer table. Just before a staff show, Richard asked Earl for one of the pigs. Rich said, "I'll sell them for you." He performed an interactive routine where he initially identified the animal as a cat. After participants saw how much potential for humor was available using that prop, Earl quickly sold out.

Richard was a lifelong magician. He began performing magic before he became a clown. He said that at first, he billed himself as a Magical Clown and performed magic in clown costume. Then, as he learned more about our art, he gradually became a clown who performed magic. He said that one difference between a magician and a clown is that a magician demonstrates something that they can do and challenges the audience to figure out how it was done. There is often very little interaction between the magician and their audience. By contrast, a clown uses magic as a reason to interact with their audience. A clown is a fool who is even more amazed than the audience by what happens when they try to perform magic.

A list of Richard's contributions and accomplishments really does not explain who Richard Snowberg was. Everyone that I have spoken to who knew Richard personally talks about his kindness, cheerfulness, and sense of humor. He loved to have fun and to try out new experiences.

It is a cliché to talk about the heart of the clown. However, Richard's heart was the secret of his success.



Bruce Johnson and Richard Snowberg visiting the National University Hospital in Singapore.

Richard often referred to Clown Camp as a family reunion. Not only was there a core group of veteran staff members, but there was a group of participants who returned again and again. My most enduring and closest friendships are with people who I met at Clown Camp. I have been friends with some of them for thirty-five years. The one thing that we all have in common is our relationship with Richard.

I am grateful for all that I have learned from Richard and the opportunities that he provided me. We traveled together four times to Europe and four times to Asia. I am a better clown and instructor because of my association with Richard. Most importantly, I am grateful to Richard for his friendship. I am a better person because I knew him.

I will close with something that he once told the Clown Camp staff. Richard said, "A short interaction that you don't think much about might be a magic moment for the other person. Provide as many potential magic moments as possible."

Richard provided me with decades of magic moments.

Rest in Peace Richard. You have earned it. The world is a better place because you were here.

THE LAST WALK-AROUND

Paul Howard “B Bob” DeBee Jr.

Paul “B Bob” Howard DeBee Jr., 65, of Cuero, Texas, took his last walk-around on December 5, 2022.

Paul was born on November 7, 1957, in East Liverpool, Ohio. He enlisted in the United States Army at the age of eighteen and was stationed in Georgia, where he met and married his first wife, Sarah. He served his country for fifteen years. Paul was the squad leader of ground surveillance radar, was involved in training and world-wide operations, served in the Gulf War in Kuwait, was stationed in Korea and Germany, and was present in Berlin when the wall came down.

Paul worked as a corporate manager for Dominoes for twenty-one years. He met the love of his life, MaryJane “Bunny” Krall at Cheerful Clown School. B Bob and Bunny married on April 1, 2006 and wore red noses at their wedding. Paul was a good husband to MaryJane and always supported her crazy foster pups. When Paul was not working, he enjoyed working their clown gigs in small nearby towns. Paul donated many hours to local charities where he offered his balloon



art and clown ministry, as well as roles as Santa and the Grinch. “He loved to give!” “He loved the Lord!”

He and MaryJane were active and very involved members of the Cheerful Clown Alley until their employment with the Stevenson Unit moved them away to Cuero, Texas. Cheerful Clown Alley members have so many fond memories of B Bob. B Bob did it all, from clown school and competitions to skits, gigs, parades, balloon art, magic tricks, clown ministry, and more. He was always so much fun to watch when he’d have witty interactions with children. B Bob will be missed, and he and MaryJane were one of the cutest clown couples ever.

Paul is preceded in death by his first wife Sarah DeBee; his parents Paul H. DeBee and Dorothy DeBee; and his brother Joel Robert DeBee.

Paul is survived by his wife MaryJane; his daughters Tammy (Bob) Thompson, Shellie (Larry) Gray, and Ruth (Rich) Gantz; his grandchildren Wayne (Karen) Gray, Kayla Gray, and Sami (Tyler) Bodenhamer. Paul was also blessed with three great grandchildren.

Debbie “Confetti” Garcia

Debbie “Confetti” Garcia, 67, of Texas took her last walk-around on February 14, 2023. She was preceded in death by her parents Joe and Guadalupe Saavedra and her loving husband Elineo Gerardo Garcia.

Debbie loved life and living it to the fullest. She was a wonderful wife, mother, and grandmother who cherished her family. She was married to the love of her life, Elineo “The Kid” Garcia, for forty-three wonderful years until he passed



in 2017. Debbie was a graduate of James Madison High School before studying at Massey Business College, while working for the University of Texas Science Center. In 2006, she retired from her position as the Executive Administrator for the Medical Director of Harris County Psychiatric Center.

As many can attest, Debbie was not one to sit idle. She had many interests and was always involved in her community. She was active in her children’s PTA and was an avid Confraternity Christian Doctrine (CCD) catechism teacher at St. Benedict the Abbot Catholic Church.

Debbie was most well known for being a member, and an occasional elected board member, of Houston’s Cheerful Clown Alley #166. She officially became “Confetti” in 1998 and was a mentor to new clowns. She brought much joy whenever she attended conventions and competed as Confetti. Debbie was a well-known award-winning clown in the skits, costume, face-painting, and balloon categories.

Additionally, Debbie was a charter member of the Optimist Club Brazoria/East Fort Bend County, a board member of the Red Hat Society (Crimson Divas), and a member of the Lions Club of Sugar Land (District 254) and Texas Caballeros Trailriders. Most important, she was President of the #1 Nana Club.

Debbie instantly lit up every room she entered because of all the bling and dazzle she added to her wardrobe, hats, glasses, and jewelry. Wow, those hats! She loved to travel, loved to visit family

(especially her grandchildren), and loved to meet up with her many friends who were always inviting her somewhere.

Debbie loved to take her grandchildren shopping and to explore the city and its venues, especially theaters. Her favorite restaurant was Texas Roadhouse and she loved apple fritters and Big Red for dessert. She loved her hometown team the Houston Astros and was a "Silver Stars" ticket holder for the Sugar Land Cowboys. Debbie loved to watch Hallmark movies in her spare time.

More than anything, Debbie dearly loved spending time with her family and friends, taking picture after picture to save the memories. One of her favorite sayings was "Do I need it or do I want it? Doesn't matter, I just bought it." She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

She is survived by her sons Raynaldo (Diana) Garcia; Eric (Beatriz) Garcia; brothers Joe Lee (Sherri) Saavedra Jr., Lawrence (Elizabeth) Saavedra, and Thomas (Marbelia) Saavedra; sisters Susan (John) Ramirez and Laura (Laura D.) Saavedra; grandchildren Raynaldo Garcia Jr., Leonardo Garcia, Elena Garcia, B. Lynn Garcia, Erica Garcia, and Allison Davalos; and a host of many other dear family and friends.



Kathleen "Noodles" Gurak

Kathleen "Noodles" Gurak, 78, of Garfield, New Jersey, took her last walk-around on March 24, 2022. Born and raised in Garfield

for twenty-six years, she lived in New York City for twenty years before returning to Garfield more than two and a half decades ago. Kathleen was a balloon artist, face painter, jewelry maker, an avid pet lover, and was a self-employed clown retiring seven years ago. She was also a member of the New Jersey Comics

Clown Alley. Prior to her career in Clowning, she worked in the audiovisual industry in New York City. She is predeceased by her father, Edward Gurak. Kathleen is survived by her mother, Mary Gurak Bielen (née Glowacki); three siblings, Frances Martin, Edward (Susan) Gurak, and Patricia Rigoliosi; a stepsister, Nancy Bielen; two nieces, two nephews, and eight great nieces and nephews.



Beth Jean "Suzy Q" Leamer

Beth Jean Leamer, 84, of Sun City, Arizona took her last walk-around on February 13, 2022.

She was born on September 28, 1937, on the family

ranch in Valentine, Nebraska to Jack and Jennie Galloway. She grew up in Bassett, Nebraska and graduated from high school in 1955. She attended Wayne State College in Nebraska where she graduated with her master's degree in teaching.

She married Wayne Kurpuweit and had two sons, Bret and Troy. In 1975, she married Ray Krueger in Foster, Nebraska, who adopted Bret and Troy. Ray passed away in 1989. In 1990, Beth married Norris Leamer. They resided in Pierce, Nebraska, and Sun City, Arizona, for the next twenty-eight years until Norris' passing in 2018.

Beth taught school in Bassett, Osmond, Humphrey, Plainview, and Battle Creek, Nebraska, before her retirement in 1991. Beth and Norris spent their time traveling and learning to be professional clowns. They were devoted Christians, and Beth was always active in church choirs. Her finest moments, however, were centered around making people smile and laugh while performing as Suzy Q the Clown, a character

she often used to share her faith. With the Red Hot Clown Club she visited schools, nursing facilities, hospitals, and performed at other local events.

She is survived by her sons Bret (Sharon) Krueger and Troy (Kim) Krueger; grandchildren Kristina Krueger, Kelsi (AJ) Martinez, Kelsey (Chris) Thornton, and Ren Krueger; and several great-grandchildren.

Dorothy "Dot" Posson



Dorothy Belle "Dot" Posson (née Dunavan), 97, of Wheat Ridge, Colorado, made her last walk-around on March 2, 2023.

She was born on a farm in Washington County Kansas on July 8, 1925

to parents Floyd Dunavan and Dolly Mae Dunavan (Roe). Dot and her late husband Robert Gilbert "Poss" Posson made up the clown duo Dot and Poss. They had lived at their home on South Alcott Street in Denver, Colorado since the 1950s, when the house was built.

Dot said she never signed documents using her middle name, Belle, because the other kids teased her as a child by calling her "Dorothy Belly." At the time, she didn't know that Belle was the French word for "pretty."

She grew up on a farm where the boys got bicycles and girls rode horses. Once, when she was helping her mother pluck goose down to use for pillows, a goose bit her on her rear end.

Dot graduated from high school and later earned a certificate to teach school. She got a job at a diner in Norton, Kansas, where she worked while living in a room upstairs.

When Dorothy first saw Robert Posson in his army uniform upon returning

home from World War II, she decided that she was going to marry him. They wed on December 19, 1945, and were together ever since. Both were members of the Boy Scouts and earned the Silver Bear, Denver's highest scouting honor. Dorothy was involved for thirty years as an adult scout with the Girl Scouts as well as the Boy Scouts, while Robert was involved with the scouts for more than seventy years.

After they moved from Norton, Kansas, Dorothy began working at the business offices of Montgomery Ward. She worked there until the department store's permanent closure. As the clowns Dot and Poss, she and Robert entertained sick children at the Children's Hospital and Special Olympics. They later became the head of the Colorado Clowns organization.

Dorothy was a talented creator of beautiful quilts and ceramics. She was active in the church and had many lifelong friends in her neighborhood. Dorothy also loved roses and grew many in her yard, planting several around an old wagon wheel that she brought with her from her father's farm in Kansas.

She was predeceased by her parents, her husband Robert, and her siblings Mildred Dunavan, Wilbur Dunavan, and Glenn R. Dunavan.

Carrie "Shimmy Giggles" Ray

Carrie Lynne Marr Ray, 60, of Euless, Texas, took her last walk-around on April 30, 2023.

Carrie was born in Fort Worth, Texas to parents Ronnie Marr and Sandra Marr. She attended Richland High School in North Richland Hills, Texas and went on to have several amazing careers over the years. She was a project manager and owner of the businesses Home Decor Outlet and Shimmy Giggle Entertainment. As a professional clown, Carrie was a member of Happi



Tyme Clown Alley in Arlington, Texas, Cowtown Clown Alley in Hurst, Texas, and Clowns of America International.

She was known for clowning around and making balloon animals throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth region. Carrie loved to leave lasting memories and smiles on the faces of everyone she met. She loved giving to others, being creative, shopping for the best deals, trying new restaurants, going on cruises, going to the casino, and exploring new opportunities. She had a big soft spot for animals, including her bunnies Boo and Loo and her beloved granddog Ellie May.

Carrie is preceded in death by her father Ronnie Eugene Marr, mother Sandra Yvonne Marr, grandmother Melba Marr, and son Richard Ray.

She is survived by her loving husband Rickey Ray of Euless, Texas; grandfather Louis (L.E.) Marr; daughter Stormy Finley of Euless, Texas; daughter and husband Misty and Greg Arwood of Weatherford, Texas; daughter and husband Rachel and Jackie Pierce of Waco, Texas; her two brothers and their wives David and Debbie Marr of Mineral Wells, Texas, and Randy and Monda Marr of Arlington, Texas; grandchildren Jalynne Gill, Lauren and Sidney Bradley, Justin, Korey and Jessica Ray, Trinity, Abby, Emma, and Tyler Arwood; great grandchildren Autumn and Myles Ray; sister Kyra Dale-Ries; brother Terry Scott Dale; sister-in-law Maryland Daniels; brother-in-law

and wife Russell and LaFrieda Ray; and brother-in-law Billy Ray, as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Carrie also cherished her many friends and fellow clowns. She is loved by many and will be dearly missed.



Mark "Pokey" Thomford

Mark "Pokey" Thomford, 68, of St. Paul, Minnesota, made his last walk-around on December 23, 2022.

Mark was a 4th degree member of Knights of Columbus and a Eucharist Minister at St. Mathews Church in St. Paul. He was also a proud graduate of Christ Child School for Exceptional Children.

Mark had been a member of COAI since 1995, and he attended many COAI Conventions, where he enjoyed competing in paradeability. He was very proud of his clown collection, which consisted of hundreds of clown figurines, artwork, and many other items. He took part in a Twin Cities Clownology workshop in 1987, and in Clown Camp in Lacrosse, Wisconsin five times. Mark was also featured in the *New Calliope's* January/February 2020 issue's "Member Spotlight."

Mark is survived by his father, Ken Thomford; special friends Mary Jane Ferber and Carolyn Jones, Peggy and Bill Tate, and the whole Ferber family; and many cousins, extended family, and other friends. **TNC**

STEP OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

By Tricia “Pricilla Mooseburger” Manuel

If you have been clowning for a while, you know that it gets harder and harder to step outside your comfort zone. Some people are born risk-takers and are always looking for their next performance thrill. Others like to play it safe. We stick to the things in which we’ve found success and are very content. Or are we? If clowning has lost its thrill, it may be time to try something new! Don’t ever say you are too old. Okay, maybe riding a unicycle isn’t the best idea after your knee replacement, but hear me out.

Clowns need community. When we are together, it uplifts us and the creative juices start to flow. Your family may roll their eyes when you try to tell them your latest joke, but your clown community will be all ears! It’s getting harder and harder to find clown community. Many clown clubs disbanded during the pandemic or they’ve been slow to return to in-person meetings. If you belong to one of those clubs, do your best to get everyone together, even if it’s just for cookies, pizza, or getting reacquainted!

For example, throw a clown garage sale! Everyone has stuff they don’t use, and it can also be fun to find something that’s new to you. Or, host a clown challenge for your group by asking everyone to bring an old prop or trick to the next meeting. Stick a number on each item, put a matching number inside a bag, and then have each clown reach into the bag to draw a number. They get to take that item home and use it to develop a quick routine for your upcoming meeting—get ready for some fun new ideas!

There are many enjoyable opportunities to stay connected online. Check out the different Clown Forums, like Mooseburger e-Alley, which was hatched during COVID. Clowns from all over the world meet over Zoom once or twice a month to learn, educate, play some games, and share something new. Joining is as easy as downloading the Zoom app or desktop software and clicking the link in an email.

If you have the time and funds, consider traveling to a camp or convention. Being together with a group of clowns—even if you don’t put on your makeup—is uplifting and FUN! Whenever you meet a new clown friend at one of these events, you can now use the internet to stay connected.



Look into scholarships if you need some help getting to a clown camp or convention. I know that COAI, WCA, and Mooseburger Camp offer scholarships. Don’t assume that you don’t qualify. You have nothing to lose by checking out the application form and the deadline times. You could receive up to five hundred dollars to offset your costs! Moose Camp even has a payment plan.

Why would I want to spend the money to go to a convention or camp if I don’t clown that often, or if I’ve been successfully clowning for many years? Again, it’s about community. Nobody laughs more than a group of clowns, whether they’re in or out of makeup. A week of laughter truly is the best medicine, and it’s worth it to be able to forget about all the worldly troubles. Dressing up for a goofy theme party is priceless. Sharing your knowledge with a new clown in a jam session reminds us that there are young people interested in our craft. If you are the young person, your new ideas give the rest of us hope, and you will learn a thing or two.

Challenge yourself to do something new in the next few months. Try a new routine, go to a new club, or set aside time to attend a camp or convention. Even if you arrive empty handed, you will return home filled with joy! **TNC**

Tricia Manuel is the unmistakable Pricilla Mooseburger. She is the founder of Pricilla Mooseburger Originals, Mooseburger Clown Arts Camp, and the nonprofit Red Nose Readers. Learn more at www.mooseburger.com

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

By Beth “Pickles” Cedarholm

ARTWORK: ISTOCK



The following are stories about real-life clown blunders from COAI members, tales of woe from entertainers whose gigs didn't go quite as expected. While these performers endured some impossibly bad situations, they soldiered on, gleaned some tidbit of wisdom from their negative experience, and becoming better—and wiser—entertainers.

Regina “Cha Cha” Wollrabe, Clown

It was a very busy clown weekend with one show and two balloon gigs. I had just returned from picking up my four kids at school and, in a rush, the glove on my hand caused my car door to slip and slam shut on my left hand. In fact, my finger was actually *stuck* in the car door, and the car door locked as it closed. I couldn't get my finger out of the door!

I screamed for one of my kids to help me but I scared them so badly that they ran into the house. I managed to fumble for the car keys with my free hand and unlock the door, but my finger was severely injured and bleeding through the glove.

I only had an hour and a half before my gig, so I knew that if I went to the hospital, I'd miss my show. I ran to my neighbor's house. With my eyes closed, I squeezed my hand over her sink, blood gushing out of my glove in the running water. My neighbor removed the glove to see how bad my injury was. My first question was “Is it going to fall off?” She assured me that, although my finger was badly injured, maybe we could just bandage it up. So she cleaned it, bandaged my finger, and I went home to get into clown—using my one good hand. Thank



goodness it was my left hand that was injured. I am right-handed, but I was surprised to discover how much I used two hands to open containers, braid hair, put on a wig, and to zip and button my costume.

Finally in clown, I packed up the car. My husband drove me to the event and then picked me up afterward to take me immediately to the hospital. During the show, the kids, whom I had performed for every Christmas season while their parents were at their work party, knew I was injured, and I made it clear that I needed them to only help me if asked—and to please not bump my hand.

We forgot about my hand as soon as I started to do the magic using my change bag and magic frame story, magic wands. The children *became* my left hand and it all worked perfectly. We enjoyed singing, dancing, and storytelling, too. I always

made balloons at this event and I had some of the older children help me this time. We inflated balloons and they built a big balloon house with my instructions.

Later at the hospital, the staff had fun with me being in clown as I explained what had happened and how the show must go on. They took an X-ray, and yes, my finger was crushed and fractured. They splinted me up and wrapped my finger and hand. I put a little face on my bandage and used it like a snowman puppet at my next two balloon events the following days. I remember learning how to use my right hand to do most of my balloon work while holding the balloon with my pinky and thumb with my left hand.

What did I learn? I learned the importance of slowing down when I had an event to do, getting myself more prepared ahead of time so I wasn't flying around and doing things so quickly, making mistakes that could cause an injury. I could have gotten into clown before I picked up my kids so that I was allowing myself more time and not feeling rushed.

Sean Carlock, Clown

I was doing a fitness gag with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey that involved two clowns at a fitness center trying to one-up each other. There was one clown in a fat suit and another in a muscular bodybuilder's suit. I was crammed inside a giant box, “the sauna,” with four other clowns. A clown in a fat suit would go into the sauna and the other clown would pretend to crank up the heat with a fake temperature gauge. When I heard the cue, I would press the lever on a CO₂ canister to release the “steam” from the top of the box. Eventually, the clown in the fat



suit would emerge from the sauna as a skinny clown, and the Village People's "YMCA" would play. A cowboy, a cop, a Native American, a biker, and a construction worker would then also exit from the box.



On this particular day, the rubber hose came loose. When I heard the cue I squeezed the handle of the CO₂ and the heavy rubber hose whipped up and hit me right between the eyes, knocking me senseless. In my dazed state, I could hear the knocking cue that I was supposed to release the CO₂, so I kept squeezing the trigger, slapping the others in the legs with the hose. Eventually, we all emerged from the sauna, and the gag ended.

Afterward, when the paramedics were examining me, they said that I was super lucky. They had seen hoses with that much pressure break through cinder block walls. Luckily, I was playing the part of the construction worker. The hard hat I was wearing was real and not just a costume piece. The hard hat was cracked and caved in where the hose had hit it. Usually I would take off the hard hat and set it down beside me, putting it on at the conclusion of the gag, but for whatever reason, I kept it on that day. If I had not been wearing that hat, the hose would have split my head like a coconut. To this day, I still have a hard time remembering names.

Beth "Pickles" Cedarholm, Clown

I was performing a magic show for a group of pediatric cancer patients and their siblings. One of my routines used slush powder and involved pouring "pickle juice" (water dyed green) into one of three cups. There was measured slush powder in the bottom of the cup into which I poured the green water, so the liquid would immediately solidify. Or at least that is what it was *supposed* to do.

In the routine, I would mix up the cups and then ask my volunteer which of

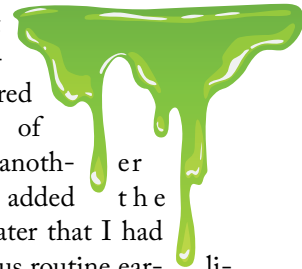


the cups he wanted me to dump over his head. He would point to one of the cups, but when I held it over his head—either because the cup was empty, or because it was the one containing the solidified pickle juice—nothing would come out of the cup. Then the volunteer would point to the cup he wanted me to dump over *my* head. Once again, nothing came out of the cup. Everybody assumed the last cup, which I would dump over the head of my volunteer, was the one containing the pickle juice.

In a perfect world, I would have made much ado over pouring the last cup over the child's head and then nothing would come out. The pickle juice had magically disappeared. But on this occasion, for whatever reason, the slush powder didn't work, and a gooey mess of green slime fell onto the volunteer's head, clumps oozing onto his shirt.

The entire audience—and even my poor volunteer—was roaring with laughter, but I was mortified that I had actually dumped my pickle juice over this poor boy's head. I whispered to him that something had gone wrong and he was not supposed to get that messy surprise on his head. I felt horrible. After the show, I met with the boy's parents, as well as the show organizers and apologized profusely. I explained that my trick had malfunctioned and that, of course, I would never try to embarrass a child.

When I got home that afternoon, I measured the same amount of slush powder into another cup and added the same amount of water that I had used in my disastrous routine earlier in the day. I thought maybe my slush powder was past its shelf life. However, the powder worked as it is intended to do. In hindsight, I think that, because I had preloaded the slush powder into the cup before I left for my show, that, somehow, some of it must have spilled out and there wasn't enough powder in the cup for it to work.



It's been about five years since the pickle juice slush powder incident, and I was so traumatized by the experience that I haven't attempted to use it since. But the organization who hired me that day forgave me, and they still regularly hire me for this event. **TNC**

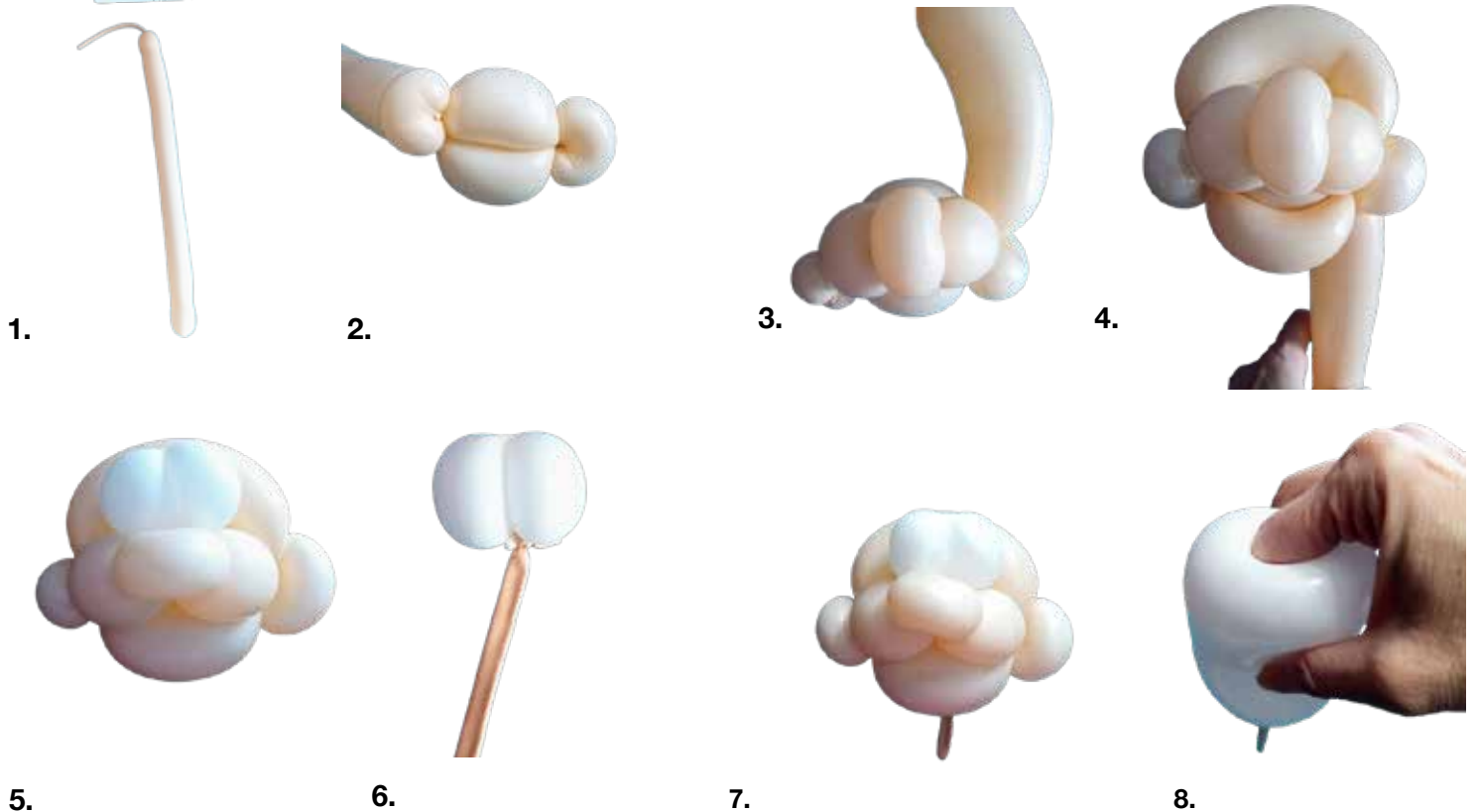
Do you want to share a tale of woe, lesson learned or "What Could Possibly Go Wrong" story? Send it to Beth "Pickles" Cedarholm at clownypickles@gmail.com. All entries are subject to editing for clarity and length.

A colorful poster for the Texas Clown Association's 39th Annual Convention. The top section is blue with white text: "August 3-6, 2023 Texas Clown Association 39th Annual Convention | Irving, Texas". Below this is a red banner with white text: "CLASSES IN SPANISH ARE AVAILABLE". The main body of the poster is dark blue with a large, stylized white and red graphic that says "WINNER, WINNER CHICKEN Dinner". To the right of this graphic is a cartoon chicken with a green body and a red comb. At the bottom left, there is a QR code and the text "Register Here". At the bottom right, there is a red banner with white text: "REGISTER TODAY!". At the very bottom, there is a URL: "https://texasclownassociation.com/tca-convention/registration/".



Dad Pop

By Merrily Johnston



1. Inflate blush, leaving a ten-finger tail.
2. Make a two-finger bubble, followed by a four-finger bubble, another two-finger bubble, and another four-finger bubble. Pinch-twist the two two-finger bubbles, which will be the ears, and wrap the first pinch-twist between the second four-finger bubble and the remaining balloon.
3. Make a three-finger bubble, followed by a two-finger bubble, then another three-finger bubble.

4. Wrap into opposite ear. Pinch twist the two-finger bubble to make the nose.
5. Make an eight-finger bubble over the top and lock into opposite ear. (This can be either the forehead or the chin, depending on the look you are going for.) Optional: If you like, add a six-inch bubble to the bottom and wrap into the ear. Trim the end.
6. To figure out where to put the eyes, decide if you want the forehead or chin to be larger.

7. For eyes, make a three-finger bubble using a white 260. Split in half, fold over, and tie a knot. Tie blush scrap between eyes.
8. Push blush between forehead and cheeks to bring eyes just over nose and pull behind chin.
9. Inflate the white 351 (or 350/360) to six fingers. This will be the shirt. Push the knot end through to opposite side.

ITEMS NEEDED:

- one skin tone 260 (I'm using blush)
- one hair-colored 260 (I'm using brown)
- one white 351 or half 350/half 360
- one Dum Dum-sized lollipop
- optional colored scrap for neck tie



9.



10.



11.



12.



13.



14.



15.



16.



17.



18.

9. Grab knot and twist several times. Hang on to the knot.

10. Take the blush piece attached to the head, pull down tight, and wrap several times between inflated 321 and the knot you're holding (which is also part of the 321). Tie a knot and trim both ends.

11. Inflate brown 260, leaving a ten-finger tail.

12. Wrap nozzle end into ear. Make a six-finger bubble and wrap into the opposite ear. Make an eight-finger bubble for a larger

forehead or a six-finger bubble for a smaller forehead, followed by a one-finger bubble and a four-finger bubble. Wrap into opposite ear. Pinch twist one-finger bubble. Make a seven-finger bubble and wrap into the opposite ear.

13. Add artwork and you can be done here if you like. Continue if you'd like to make it more intricate.

14. Use fingers to pull bottom of the shirt apart.

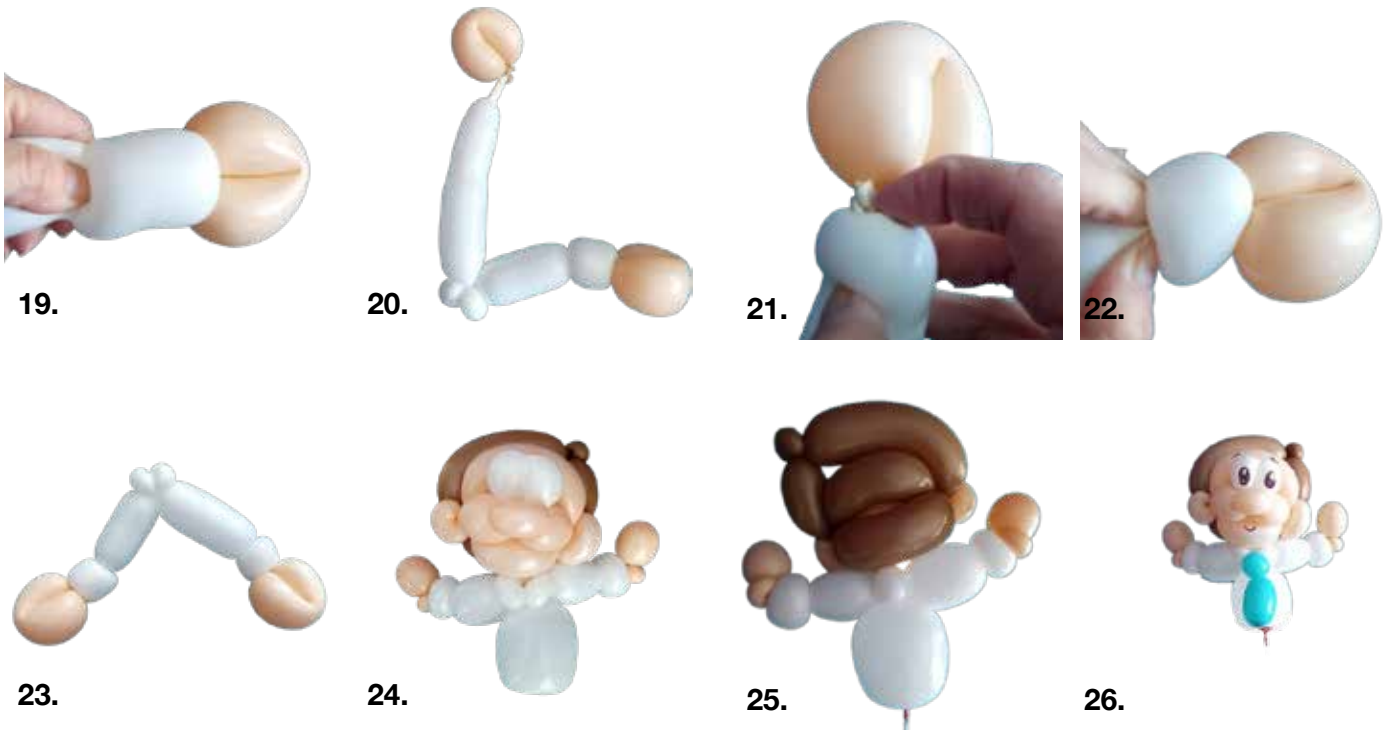
15. Insert lollipop

16. To add arms, inflate white 260 to sixteen fingers and release a few

puffs of air to make super soft. Tie the end, leaving a three-finger end between nozzle and knot. Make hands by inflating blush 260 to five fingers. Make a loop by folding over and tying knot. Trim to leave a three-finger uninflated end. Repeat process a second time so that you create two in total.

17. Marriage-twist hand into arm by tying the white and blush three-finger ends together, leaving a nice space in between.

18. Use finger to push blush into white.



19. Grab knot on the other side, twist several times, and push knot back towards hand.

20. Make a four-finger bubble and two one-finger bubbles; pinch twist these to make collar. Make another four-finger bubble and twist, then let go, to leave a line for how long the arm should be. Add four more fingers (super soft) and then three fingers uninflated, tie knot, and leave three more fingers uninflated and trim. Tie together the long ends of the hand and sleeve.

21. Push hand into arm by pushing the knot first toward the arm, until you reach the line where the arm should end.

22. Grab and twist knot several times, then push back toward hand.

23. Arms should look like this.

24. Wrap the arms in between the head and the shirt, with the collar in front.

25. Make a two-finger bubble and tie knot. Wrap into the back of the shirt between the arms.

26. Make a three-finger bubble using a scrap of 260 in whatever color you'd like to use for the tie. Make a one-finger bubble and pinch twist. Tie off and leave a two-finger end to wrap into the collar. Use a glue dot (I use U-Glue Dashes) to secure the tie to the shirt, if you prefer.

Merrily Johnston is a professional clown and balloon twister in Casper, Wyoming. You may reach her by email at merrilythec clown@msn.com.





MAGIC

By Skip Way

I spent three wonderful decades performing in clown across Europe and North America before I gradually transitioned to stand-up comedy and magic. Twenty-two years later, my wardrobe, shoes, and makeup case remain lovingly enshrined in my studio. Those clown years continue to inspire the family entertainer I have become.

I readily accept that my clown persona was much closer to the children than my magician. The classic magician performs his wonders with well-rehearsed choreography and dexterity. Each performance treats the eye and delights the mind. Children tend to believe that magicians can do wondrous things with the wave of a simple wooden stick. Their imagination soars with endless possibilities of our magical fare. Magicians expand our appreciation for the universe around us.

But the clown! His (or her) simplest task may devolve into an exuberant struggle. The clown meets every challenge head on, as a task worth mastering in the most inconceivable manner. This funhouse image of the human condition breeds an empathic bond with child and adult. Yes, the clown invites us to look within ourselves, and this is the foundation of the clown's superpower.

In truth, the clown is no less polished. Clowns expertly hide their meticulously choreographed and rehearsed actions beneath a cloak of mischievous chaos and exploration. Where the magician indulges our intellect, the clown caresses our hearts.

These two arts merge within the kidshow artist. Blending the clown's innocent bumbling with the art of prestidigitation draws children into a world rich in creative fantasy. The recipe creates awe and astonishment richly seasoned with kindness and laughter.

Magic and clowning have their stubborn purists, too: those who believe that childlike humor has no role in magic and that clowns, by their very nature, are incapable of performing wondrous feats of legerdemain. P.T. Barnum's iconic expletive fits beautifully here—"Humbug!"

The magical clown (or the clownish magician) yields greater power over a young audience than the most dynamic and skilled Vegas conjuror. Our magic lives not on a distant stage in some sterile theater, but within the very imagination and heart of each child. We—magicians and clowns—can learn a great deal from one another about capturing the hearts of our young audiences and their parents. Open your mind! Find your balance! Laugh long and prosper! **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.

LEAVE A LEGACY

You may now help COAI continue its mission of sending Ambassadors of Joy into the world by remembering Clowns of America International with a financial gift in your will—or by making a **Living Legacy Gift** right now. Your name will be included on a special **Legacy Roll of Honor** published annually in *The New Calliope*.



To discuss a Legacy or Living Legacy donation, contact the COAI Business Office at

1-352-357-1676



REBO'S Clown Bits and Props

By Bev Bergeron
Honk Horn

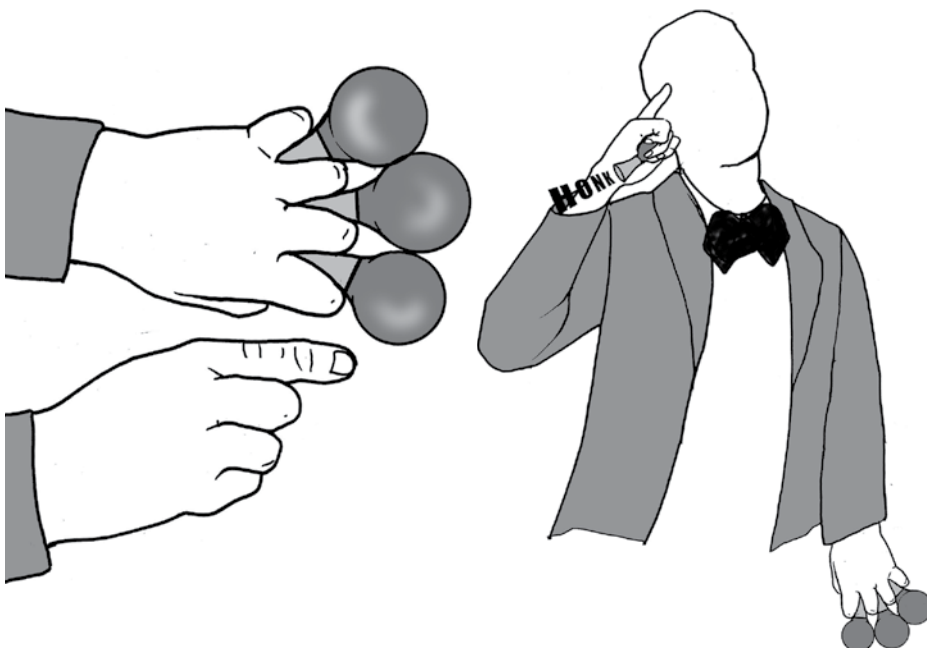
ARTWORK BY TONY DUNN

This is another one of those effects that reads as if it would not entertain anyone. But believe me when I say I have used this hundreds of times—both as myself and as my Rebo the Clown character. It is a “walk-around” bit of business that a clown can use before a show, or that anyone can use at a cocktail party.

EFFECT: The performer approaches the spectators and asks someone to point to one of the three horns the performer is holding in their left hand. As the person points, a honk is heard from the horn.



METHOD: A fourth horn, which the performer is holding in his or her right hand, is the source of the honk. As the spectator points to the selected horn, the performer uses his fingers to squeeze the bulb of the horn. The squeezing movement is concealed by the pointing and movement of the hand. Repeat the honking several times and then say, “I don’t understand this magic.” Reach up and scratch your forehead with the right forefinger and honk the horn. State, “It really fools me.” Many times, not everyone in the group will see the extra horn, and you can repeat the effect a few more times. It gets to be a lot of fun, like the “paper balls over the head” routine. **TNC**



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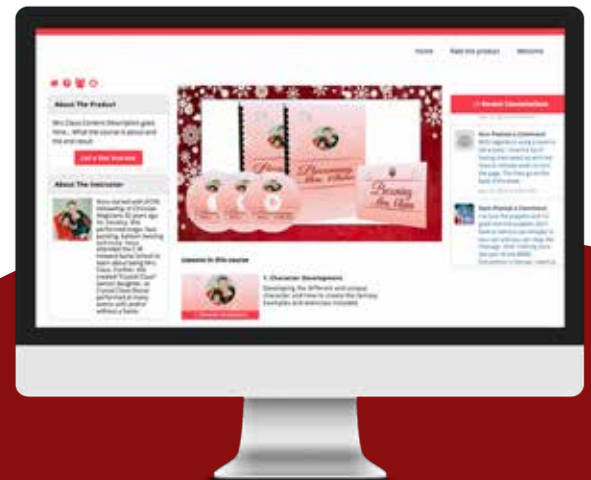
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