

# THE NEW CALLIÖPE

For Members of Clowns of America International

May / June 2020  
Volume 37 • Number 3



**DANNY "LANKY"  
KOLLAJA**

**Lifetime Achievement Award**

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Rose Cardenas

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## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

# DANNY KOLLAJA

By Rose Cardenas

In 1976, Danny Kollaja participated in his school's annual talent show as one of six clowns who moved props, danced, and provided circus-themed entertainment between acts. It was the beginning of a lifetime that he could never have anticipated, the beginning of a COAI Lifetime Achievement Award winner.

After the show, a woman approached him in the lobby and told him he had natural talent for clowning. She told him about the local clown alley and asked him to come see what it was all about. He went. He participated in events the alley was contracted to do. And kept going and growing as a clown.

Danny, who came to be known as “Lanky,” has enjoyed many opportunities to pass on his skills to those who are new to clowning. He has been teaching at the Clown School at his local junior college for more than fifteen years, becoming a mentor to more than a hundred clowns. He also teaches at his own and other alleys, providing lectures on makeup design and application. His specialty is the traditional American circus clown look.

Danny has been involved and served in leadership for many years in the COAI and the Texas Clown Association. He was a part of the first Alley in Texas, Alley #23, founded by five sisters. Danny is concerned about the reduction in the number of clowns over recent years, with not only fewer professional clowns but also fewer who take it on as a hobby. He blames the stigma created by Hollywood—the fad of disliking and fearing clowns. His desire is to help overcome that stigma and bring back the fun and enjoyment of clowns.

For many years, Danny felt it wasn't viable for him to work full time as a clown. He studied sociology in college and had a series of jobs at schools, churches, and camps, all jobs involving working with people. Those environments allowed Danny to watch and learn human behavior. He now works full time as a clown but continues to supplement his income with side jobs. He has enjoyed having jobs that allowed him to work remotely, even often setting up in a hotel room along his travels.

Danny maintains a rigorous schedule throughout the year, spending more than seven months traveling to work at fairs and festivals throughout the country. He's even performed at the National Culture Festival in Fukuoka, Japan. He provides strolling entertainment with comedy magic, balloon sculptures, fire eating, riding a tiny clown bike, and comedy walkarounds, at times with his stilt-walking characters Sheriff Shorty, Dirty Dan, Sultan, Marshall Slim, and Uncle Sam. He also does stage shows with skits and magic and large-scale games



Top: Lanky never loses his appetite for clowning. Bottom: Danny Kollaja.



Danny "Lanky" Kollaja at the Titus County Fair in Texas.

and contests which include his comedy trivia contest and his rock, paper, scissors tournament, complete with a boxing ring. Danny also has a wide variety of family games and contests to enhance fairs, festivals, and other parties. He has learned that diversification is the key to ongoing bookings.

His work also includes body painting, a significantly different art than the typical face painting. Rather than simply painting on cheeks or full faces, Danny takes the freedom to expand his canvas to full arms, heads, and necks. His specialties are dragons and gardens.

In addition to his many activities at fairs and festivals, Danny has traveled extensively on goodwill mission trips to over ten countries. He traveled to Russia and Afghanistan with Patch Adams of

movie fame and has also made trips to Cambodia and Guatemala. Following his first trip to Afghanistan with Patch Adams, a documentary, entitled *Clownin' Kabul*, was made that won a Chinese film festival. The coalition of clowns that made the trip included representatives from each continent. They visited hospitals and orphanages as a mission of peace to that war-torn country. He wanted to express that all could coexist with peace and laughter. He so enjoyed seeing the reaction of a child who had been in distress, to see distress replaced by smiles.

As a result of the trip, Danny and his fellow travelers prepared a list of items that were needed in Afghanistan to provide health care and meet daily needs, including antibiotics, basic hospital supplies, and food. The items were

obtained through many non-government organizations, and Danny made a second trip, traveling with the shipment on the freight plane, to escort it securely to the NGOs which would take care of its distribution. Afghanistan was one of the few countries that Danny has visited that had no history of clowns or clowning. One young man he encountered asked his translator what kind of animal he was.

After the film was released, Danny was contacted by Angelina Jolie, who invited the International Coalition of Clowns to bring joy and laughter to Cambodia, another war-torn country. He was one of six clowns who visited there.

Danny's first visit to Russia occurred before the end of the Soviet Union. The country, at that time, was still

## COVER

Communist and not nearly as developed as it is today. Along with Patch Adams, Danny joined a group of medical doctors who were also clowns. They loved being silly with those to whom they were also bringing healing.

Danny has also made several trips to Guatemala, following a chance meeting with a demonstrator at Sam's Club. He joined a group which provided medical clinics in remote villages. Danny's job was to distract all those who were waiting and keep them away from the windows which provided the only light for the medical procedures being done inside. Each time the group entered a new village, a fiesta was held, complete with the clowning entertainment and piñatas. Danny has a fond memory of sitting on the side of a mountain applying makeup in front of a crowd of fascinated children.

He has found that as he traveled in this range of cultures and societies where he didn't know the language, facial expressions, body language, and sounds could be used instead of speech. His travels have enriched his life and broadened his perspective to the experiences and suffering of many throughout the world, and he feels privileged to have brought fun and joy into their lives. Chet Gordon, a photo editor who traveled with the team to Afghanistan, wrote, "Working as a photographer at the New York Daily News and having traveled to areas of world conflict and disaster, I found Danny's spirit and heart uplifting. I was privileged to photograph him as he changed into character, "Lanky the Clown," and as he then performed shows for the children of Kabul. In stifling heat and makeshift performance areas, Danny never complained... He is the consummate professional."

After many years of travel, Danny became the coordinator of trips with many other clowns. He took care of the planning and logistics to enable others to spread the joy and peace to which he is committed. Because of current travel restrictions and conditions, it is much more difficult to carry out these trips.



*Clockwise from upper left: Danny Kollaja. Towering above his fans at ten-feet tall, Sheriff Shorty receives an enthusiastic high-five. Danny "Lanky" Kollaja—always ready to help. Right: Danny as "Marshall Slim."*

Over his long career, Danny has had many meaningful clowning experiences. He enjoys the fact that he will not know the impact his work of today will make on the future. At one fair, a man and his daughter approached him with a photo request. He said to Danny, "I want to prove you are real! My mom has a photo of you and me when I was seven years old." At a father's birthday party hosted by his daughter, Danny was doing a balloon sculpture for a gentleman who asked, "Do you remember me? You did my fourth birthday party!" He loves that he can create moments and memories while he doesn't even know he's doing it.

One of Danny's grandmothers was showing early signs of dementia and losing the ability to identify her loved ones. When Danny went to visit her with his mother, his mother said, "Mom, Danny's here." She asked, "Danny who?" His mother tried again, saying, "Lanky's here!" His grandmother said, "Oh, my clown!"



Danny Kollaja has spent the last thirty-five years bringing joy across the country and across the world and teaching and inspiring others to do the same. Although he has never won Clown of the Year even after eight nominations, his life and experience have clearly achieved COAI's highest recognition—the Lifetime Achievement Award. **TNC**



## From the President

Mike "Bonkers" Cox

As I enter my last two months as your president, I want to thank everyone for all the support you have given during the twenty years that I have been on this great Board of Directors. A lot of changes have been made recently that will help COAI survive and grow, but we need our members' full support to do this. Share the love of clowning and share COAI with your friends. If you can, gift a membership.

As I type this message, the world is struggling with a pandemic like none of us have ever seen before. Everyone has been affected and my prayers go out to each and every member to be safe and healthy. With everyone cooperating, this pandemic will pass, but how long will this take? I would like to request that if any COAI member contracts Covid-19, please let us know via the "Contact the President" link on the website ([www.mycoai.com](http://www.mycoai.com)) or by e-mailing me at [coai.president.mike@gmail.com](mailto:coai.president.mike@gmail.com). I am concerned for everyone's well-being during this "storm."

We know times are tough for everyone right now. COAI has offered balloon workshops on Zoom for everyone. Watch Facebook and e-mails for more information on other Zoom workshops that come available for our members.

On June 11, 2020, we will hold our 2020 Annual meeting per our bylaws. You will find the Zoom invite and official notice on page 8. If you are not familiar with using

Zoom, please contact your Regional Vice President for further assistance. Our monthly board meetings are held online using the Zoom platform. We are limited to one hundred participants, and that number includes your twenty board members, our parliamentarian, *The New Calliope* editor, and Business Office manager, thus limiting our membership to seventy-seven member participants.

Finally, I want to thank the Niagara Clown Alley and COAI Board for making the very tough decision to reschedule the 2020 COAI Convention to 2021. The COAI Convention will be mightier than ever! Thank you to Connie Morrow and Jim Donoughe for all their hard work leading up to this rescheduling. Now it is up to this membership to further support your 2021 Convention by mailing in your registration (if not already registered) and show your support. **TNC**



## HOW TO VOTE IN THE BOARD ELECTION

Voting is simple. Sign in to your account at [www.mycoai.com](http://www.mycoai.com) with your username and password. If you do not know your username and password or do not have them yet, call the COAI Business Office at 1-352-357-1676. Please note that you may not vote using another member's login information.

Click on "Membership" in the top menu. Click on "Election Ballot" in the drop-down menu. Check to see that your COAI number and your region are correct at the top of the form. Complete the form. Double check your entries and click "Submit" at the bottom of the page. You have voted! For those without access to a computer, a printed ballot is available on page 25.

Voting is now open! No votes will be accepted after midnight June 7, 2020 Eastern Time.

## Are You Enjoying Your New Member Benefit?

All COAI members may now access free books on the COAI website at [www.mycoai.com](http://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.

## 2020 COAI General Membership Meeting

### ARTICLE V MEETINGS

#### Section 1. Meetings

a. There shall be one general membership meeting held each year, which shall be held at the Annual Convention. The date and site of the Annual Convention shall be designated by the Board. If a COAI convention is not held in any year, then the annual general membership meeting will be held on a date designated by the Board, provided that date is not on a legal holiday.

Due to the rescheduling of the 2020 Clowns of America International convention and per the above bylaw requirement, the General Membership Meeting has now been scheduled for Thursday, June 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Eastern time via our online program—Zoom.

A Zoom invitation will be sent out via an email blast to all members. We ask that all questions regarding the meeting must be either e-mailed to the president at *coai.president.mike@gmail.com* or mailed to: COAI General Membership Meeting, 9415 Alameda Ave, Henrico, Virginia 23294. All agenda items, if mailed, must be post-marked no later than May 28, 2020, and e-mails must be received before midnight, June 1.

Questions presented during the meeting will be done via the chat option. Someone will be monitoring all chats, so please keep chats open only for questions as we are limiting questions to two per member (one question and one follow up). We will also

have board members monitoring the Zoom meeting to ensure members do not speak out of turn. The chat option must be used for all questions during the meeting. All microphones will be muted at the beginning of the meeting.

I have asked the current board members to be present and for each to present their report. The 2020-2021 COAI budget will also be presented and voted on. In order to hold a vote, we must have a quorum of thirty members present.

Any additions to the agenda must be made before the meeting and will not be added once the agenda has been presented.

I look forward to seeing you on June 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Sincerely,

Michael Cox,

*COAI President*

### Zoom login information is as follows:

*zoom.us/j/649073451?pwd=cU1EL2NMM2tiZGtTZ0Q2RzkkxUW5pdz09*

**Meeting ID:** 649 073 451

**Password:** 513141

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**Meeting ID:** 649 073 451

Find your local number: *zoom.us/u/aUm3eDZGM*

### CLOWN CALENDAR

**November 12–15, 2020**

**Mid-Atlantic Clown Association Convention**

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

*www.midatlanticclownassociation.com*

**April 6–11, 2021**

**COAI Convention**

Niagara Falls, New York

*www.mycoai.com*

**July 12–18, 2021**

**International Jugglers Association Festival**

Wichita, Kansas

*www.juggle.org*

**July 14–17, 2021**

**International Ventriloquists Society Convention**

Erlanger, Kentucky

*www.ventriloquistsociety.com*

**July 27–August 1, 2021**

**Mooseburger Clown Arts Camp**

Buffalo, Minnesota

*www.mooseburger.com*



Send event information to *thenewcalliope@gmail.com* with *Clown Calendar* in the subject line.

# Clowning & Magic

By Kent Cummins

*"Be a clown, be a clown, all the world loves a clown."*

– Cole Porter lyrics, sung by Gene Kelly and Judy Garland

Many clowns, including some readers of this magazine, are also magicians, and many magicians are clowns, or at least very funny magicians.

At a recent magic club meeting, we talked about the Professor Cheer's Comedy Rope Trick, one of my favorite comedy magic routines. It was invented by an American magician and clown, Charles "Chas" Cheer nearly a century ago. You start pulling a rope out of your sleeve, and it gets stuck. You find the other end and start pulling it out of your pants leg. It gets stuck again, so you find the third end (that's what makes it magical) in the other pants leg. You pull again, and the whole rope comes out...with a pair of boxer shorts on the end!

I don't wear clown makeup when I perform these days, but the addition of this one trick makes me somewhat of a clown.

## Why should a magician learn clowning?

We don't think of the most famous magicians as clowns (Houdini, Thurston, Blackstone, Mark Wilson, Doug Henning, David Copperfield), but all used comedy in their performances.

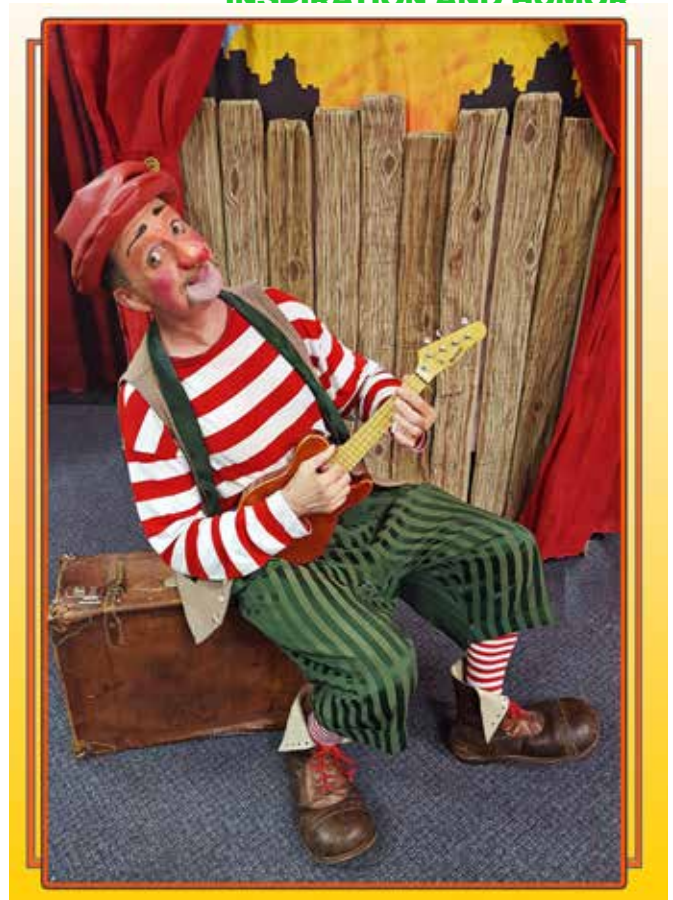
If you want to become famous, maybe you should, too. In fact, even if you do not aspire to fame and fortune, one of the best ways to entertain with magic is by effectively using comedy. Who understands comedy better than a professional clown? "Rebo the Magic Clown" was a vital part of Mark Wilson's early shows. When I was a kid and watched *The Magic Land of Allakazam*, I read that Rebo the Clown was really well-known magician Bev Bergeron.

## My Mom the Clown

My mom sometimes performed as a clown. My son had a clown costume for Halloween when he was younger. (He turns fifty this year.) My daughter helped pay her way through college by balloon twisting as "Nogee the Clown" (because there is no "G" in our last name).

I was occasionally a clown in the backyard circuses that I put together in elementary school, although I was more interested in being the magician. I was once hired to be "Chester the Childfest Clown" to promote and perform in a family festival in Austin, Texas, and I still perform as "Felonious the Fool," my Renaissance character.

I also invariably hired a clown as part of my larger magic and variety shows. Mike Winslett, who performed as "Squeeky the Clown," was the best I have ever seen at warming up a crowd to get a show started. Mike combined magic, juggling, music,



Rik Gern as "Bonzo Crunch."

balloon sculpture, fire eating, and physical comedy to enthrall audiences young and old.

When Mike died in a tragic accident last year, I was devastated. I had planned to have him open my *Seventy Years of Magic* celebration shows last November, so I opened the shows with a video montage honoring him. Look for "In Memory of Mike Winslett" on Facebook.

## What is it like being a clown?

"Chester the Childfest Clown" was written up in *Children Today* magazine, a publication of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It was a long time ago (1987), but I think the published clown bio tells us a lot about clowning. Anytime I am going to play a character that is different from "The Fantastic Kent Cummins," I create a complete autobiography of my character to guide my performances.

## Chester the Clown: A Brief Autobiography

I was born on April 1, and with my April Fool's Day birthday, I often think back to the Renaissance fool or court jester, the forerunner of today's clowns.

My parents were from Sarasota, Florida, the winter quarters for the Greatest Show on Earth, but I was born in Austin, Texas, while the circus was on tour. I traveled with my parents as a child, learning magic, tumbling, puppets, juggling, and other circus skills, but I never enjoyed the vagabond existence. While kids dream of running away and joining the circus, I eventually left the circus to join the real world!

My family traditions go back to Joseph Grimaldi, the comic genius of a century and a half ago, who first invented the mischievous, energetic, saucy and outrageous red-and-white-colored clowns. Like all other clowns since, my nickname is "Joey" in his honor.

Circus scholars divide clowns generally into three types. My father was an auguste clown, with exaggerated makeup and clothing and slapstick humor. My older brother became a character clown, sometimes called the "Carpet Clown," but recognized today as the tramp in the tradition of Otto Griebling and Emmett Kelly. I'm technically a "Grotesque Whiteface" clown, meaning a traditional whiteface clown with exaggerated, colorful features and a big red nose. I'm most comfortable in my bright, baggy costume, although I sometimes dress up in tuxedo and top hat for special occasions.

My idol is still Lou Jacobs, possibly the most widely recognized clown in the world. I love people, especially when I can make them laugh. If I could have any job in the whole world, I'd still be a clown!

## Aren't most people afraid of clowns?

No.

Fear of clowns is a real thing, though quite rare. The term "coulrophobia" means "a persistent and irrational fear of clowns." However, most people are not afflicted with this strange malady.



*Kent Cummins performing Professor Cheer's Comedy Rope Trick.*

Why do a few people have an irrational fear of clowns? The best guesses center on the evil clowns portrayed in books and movies. If you are going to dress as a clown, be prepared to occasionally encounter someone who claims to be afraid of you, but also realize that some people are also afraid of spiders, and snakes – and even butterflies!

## What is the secret to performing as a clown?

The best clown I know is right here in Austin, making his living as a hometown clown. He combines excellent magic, music, and juggling skills to make his performances a one-man variety show. But he is a clown.

"Bonzo Crunch, Fool at Large," is the clown character created by Rik Gern, a graduate of the Ringling Brothers Barnum



and Bailey Clown College, who worked for Ringling for many years. I recently sat down with Rik and asked him to talk about his experiences, ideas, and suggestions regarding magic and clowning.

Rik was a clown long before he became a magician. His first trick, the Multiplying Billiard Balls, was an assignment for a commedia dell'arte show. Later, he learned several important magic tricks from Bob Brown and Jay Marshall at Magic Inc. in Chicago. Today, magic is a vital part of his shows. He is particularly proud of the Linking Coat Hangers, which he bought from Mike Caveny and spent years perfecting.

Rik points out that magicians tend to specialize in what he calls "ta da" magic, in which the magician demonstrates his magical powers. The magician makes a silver ball float in the air: "Ta da!" Clowns don't have special powers, and this kind of magic presentation doesn't generally work for clowns.

A second form of magic happens when the performer attempts to perform magic but is not successful, the classic magician in trouble. Nothing works until the audience steps in to help. For example, the performer cannot seem to restore the cut rope, but when a volunteer



“Bonzo Crunch.”

says the magic words, the rope is restored. It’s the kids in the audience who make the magic happen, not the clown.

A third type of magic occurs when the magic is controlled by the universe itself. Perhaps the props themselves do amazing things to the confusion and perhaps consternation of the performer. For example, the ketchup bottles keep multiplying to the performer’s continuing surprise. This works exceptionally well for clowns.

Rik warns that, in the hometown marketplace, clowns tend to be paid less than magicians. He likens magicians to the doctors and lawyers, jugglers to the plumbers and electricians, and clowns as waiters and dishwashers. However, the best clowns make more than the worst magicians. Whatever your performing passion, just make sure that you do it well.

Rik says, “Clowning can be yet another skill that helps you create a richer, more well-rounded show. another skill to have in your arsenal. But don’t make the mistake of thinking clowning is just acting silly. Magicians can effectively use the psychological orientation of a clown to make their performances more entertaining. It’s all about your persona. Who is the driver in your act? Are you willing to risk failure? An advantage of being a clown is that it takes some of the weight off your shoulders. You have permission to fail! When you are studying a new magic trick, you need to find every way that the trick can go wrong. As a magician, those are pitfalls. For a clown, they are opportunities!”

## Resources for Clowning

Clowns of America International (COAI) and this magazine, *The New Calliope* is a great resource. There are also many other organizations for clowns, local and international. Google them, and choose one or more that best suits your needs. Just remember that, as with magic clubs, clown organizations vary widely.

Many books are available on clowning, including dozens targeted for magicians. Again, the quality varies widely. Bonzo Crunch recommends scanning various books to see what works for you. His favorite book is *Clowns*, by John H. Towsen.

Bonzo Crunch especially recommends studying the performances of Buster Keaton (for a sense of comedic style), W.C. Fields (for his brilliant prop manipulation), Avner the Eccentric (for his incredible ability to get the maximum entertainment value out of a simple premise), and especially Tommy Cooper (for making magic tricks truly hilarious). Learn how comedy is conceived and created and how these wonderful performers interpret comedy in their performances.

## The Magic of Clowning

Most people love clowns. It is fun to dress up in a silly costume and do silly things. Most people think being a clown would be more fun than their day jobs. But there is far more to being a successful clown than just looking and acting silly, just as there is more to being a magician than simply learning a few magic tricks.

You can make clowning your day job! Thousands have done so, and if you are already into magic, juggling, or balloon twisting, you have a leg up on the competition.

While doing research for this column, I saw an article by Dave Hoffner (“Dr. Dave”) in *The New Calliope*, published for members of COAI, entitled, “Clowns Truly Are Magical!” I thought it would be about clowns using magic tricks, but instead it was about two clowns who visited a child with cancer and helped him forget his problems for a while.

The mother’s thank-you letter seems like a perfect way to end this month’s column: “You made a little boy laugh and smile in a way I never could have done on my own. Clowns truly are magical!”



Send comments and ideas to [kent@magichotline.com](mailto:kent@magichotline.com).

*A version of this article is being published simultaneously in The Linking Ring magazine for which Kent Cummins is an award-winning columnist. TNC*

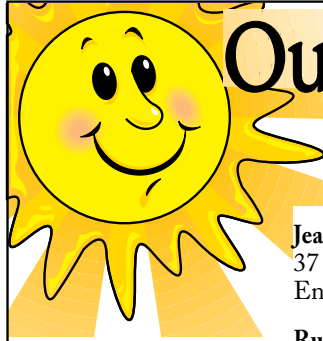
## Convention Drawings for Registered Members

By Connie "Punkin" Morrow

The Mighty 2020 COAI Convention in Niagara Falls, New York, had to be rescheduled to April 6-11, 2021 due to Covid-19. But don't fret! We now have even more time to make this an even mightier convention!

For all who have registered for the convention, there will be a live drawing on Facebook every Friday for prizes. The prizes could be anything—except for Donuts. You will not win Donuts D. Clown. We need him as part of the planning committee.

If you're registered, please check the COAI Facebook page every Friday night to see whose name will be drawn to win a prize. Good luck!



# 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 Etkorn**  
1015 Champion Circle  
Longmont, CO 80503

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

**Good Cheer Chairperson:**  
**Crissy "Miz Daisy" Melnitzke**  
*crissy@mizdaisyentertainment.com.*  
863-221-4183

## Welcome, NEW MEMBERS!

Gianna "Pixie" Albanese NJ  
Diana L "Lady Di" Cline OK  
Deborah "Posie" Davis TX  
Paul "B. Bob" Debee TX

Sanford "Sardini" Eisman OH  
Randy "Patchy Klein/Gooby" Gurule OK  
Tonya "Me-me" Johnson NH  
Dirk "Born Again Bozo" Maravilla WA

Hannah Publicover ME  
Michael "Madcap Mike" Stelzer OK  
George "Shuffles" Swiatlowski MI

A big thank you to  
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**Barbara Bird**  
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# Down the Parade Route

By John “Jay Jay” Joseph



I love a parade.

Allow me to share a parade idea with you. One of my favorite parade gimmicks is an idea I got from judging paradeability at the Midwest Clown Association Round Up when I saw Nancy Opatich use a similar gimmick as a Smile Detector. I asked her if I could make a couple small changes and use this gimmick, and she agreed.

You walk the parade route as you gently squeak the horn. When you see someone not smiling or paying attention, you walk toward him, squeaking the horn faster and faster as you approach. Once you reach the person, you squeak it louder and faster. It's a guaranteed method for making him smile.



## The Prop

To make this prop, you will need a Frisbee, kid's bicycle horn, rubber bands, staff, and something to connect the staff to the Frisbee. I used a kid's sword for my staff and a bolt and washer to connect the staff to the Frisbee. Then, I put a red nose on the bottom to cover the bolt.

Next, attach the horn to the sword with rubber bands. I tried rope at first, but the rubber bands worked better for me.

Decorate the top of the Frisbee as a Frown Detector.

Once you approach your spectator, you raise the detector so he can see the underside of the Frisbee as you increase the frequency of the squeaker. A friend of mine drew this image of my clown face. I'm thinking of taking a photo of myself and gluing it to the underside. I'm certain some of you artists can be very creative with your image.

This is a great parade gimmick. It's lightweight and can easily be carried on a two-mile parade as I use it over and over again.

I recently used this gimmick in paradeability at a national convention. Two judges scored me in the nineties, and one judge gave me a very low score. I took fourth place. Sadly, the judge that scored me low had only one comment. "Your squeaker is too loud." Really? Too loud during a parade? Well, have fun and leave them laughing or, at least, smiling or smirking.

You can reach John “Jay Jay” Joseph down the parade route at [jayjay360@hotmail.com](mailto:jayjay360@hotmail.com). **TNC**



# COAI AWARDS

Awards are usually presented at the annual COAI Convention. Due to the rescheduling of the 2020 Niagara Falls convention to April 6–11, 2021, we are recognizing the 2020 award winners in this issue. They will also be honored at the 2021 convention, along with the 2021 recipients.

## EXCELLENCE IN CLOWNING

Our 2020 winners of the Excellence in Clowning Award are Jim “Donuts” Donoughe and Connie “Punkin” Morrow.

### **James “Donuts” Donoughe**

Jim has given much to advance the art of clowning. He currently serves as the Vice President of the Niagara Falls Clown Alley. He has taught magic, balloon sculpture, face painting, glitter tattoos, as well as clowning classes for magic clubs. Jim has written articles on mentoring and clown week for *The New Calliope*. He has also written many pages for his Wacky Walk Arounds lecture, which he presented at the MACA and COAI Conventions. He currently serves as co-chair for the Committee of International Conventions for “The Mighty” Convention in Niagara Falls, New York.

Jim has given countless hours in service to the community. He has provided weekly entertainment at a nursing home for the past four years, performing with puppets, music, and magic and providing a variety of entertainment. Jim has committed many hours to performing in parades, including those for the Shawnee Fire Hall, Lockport Independence Day, Canal Fest, Peach Festival, and the Electric Light Parade. In addition, he has devoted his time to many other community events throughout each year, providing entertainment to lift people’s spirits and raise money for worthy charities.



Jim has shown an ongoing desire to improve his performance skills. He began his clown education by studying mime and clowning at Niagara University. He also put in significant time to studying balloon sculpture and magic. He has continued to improve his skills through learning at Alley Meetings, national conventions (MACA and COAI), Facebook live classes, and numerous YouTube videos.

Jim has been in the top ten for balloon twisting three times, and he has won a place in the Top Ten at COAI in skits twice with third and eighth places. Jim has also won third and fourth places for face painting at COAI and first place for face painting at MACA, where he also won second place in balloon twisting. He was the recipient of the 2018 individual CHARLIE Award. Jim is best known for his character, “Donuts D Clown,” but he also appears as “Pirate Pete,” “Jiminy,” and “Elf First Class.” Jim has been honored for his clown skills on many occasions, but even more, he has also willingly taken much of his time to share his knowledge and work to make all clowns stronger.

The final requirement for the Excellence in Clowning Award is “irrefutable evidence of a clown heart.” Not only is Jim’s clown heart obvious from all he has given to his community through the art of clowning, but he also has been honored by the recommendations of many highly respected members of the clowning world, including Kathy Mulholland, Carol Shire, Connie Morrow, Carol Marx, Mary DePalma, Sandy Peters, and Bob Gretton.

Jim has shown his great dedication to clowning and his community with all the hours he has devoted in service. He has never stopped taking his time to learn, improve his skills, and share what he has learned with others. He has been honored for his expertise with the awards he has earned in competition. Most of all, he has touched the lives of others with his clown heart.

## Connie “Punkin” Morrow

In all she has done throughout her career as a clown, Connie has committed herself to excellence.

Connie is dedicated to participating in her local Alley and the COAI. She is currently a member and one of the leaders of the Niagara Clown Alley, but she was also one of the founders of the Corn E Clowns Alley and served as the president and newsletter editor. For years, she was the New York representative for the Red Nose Response. With Jim Donoughe, she is currently serving as co-chair for the Committee of International Conventions for “The Mighty” Convention in Niagara Falls, New York.

Connie has given much of herself to the world of clowning. She enjoys the many hours she spends teaching clowning to many in her Clown Club, which has met once a month for several years at her local library. As a result of her interaction with the community, she has also taken her time to speak in local schools, explaining and educating children in the real art of clowning. In addition, she is very involved with the Red Nose Response, Camp Good Days and Special Times, and Hunter’s Hope Foundation.

As she began her career in clowning, Connie took the time to learn the skills she needed. She began by learning balloon art and face painting, but as she continued in clowning, she realized she needed more education. She participated in the ten-week Clown School in New York and learned many new skills. More recently, she continues learning with the purpose of passing on her skills to others. She teaches many through her Clown Club and also enjoys sharing her knowledge in *The New Calliope*.

Connie has placed in the Top Ten for Lite Auguste two times in the COAI competition.



In addition to her primary character, “Punkin,” Connie does her Christmas characters, “Holly Berry” and “Forgetful.” She performs as the Easter Bunny at Easter and her witches, “Wanda” and “Wendy,” at Halloween. Finally, for a country theme, she appears as “Cow Patty.”

Connie has been the recipient of many awards for her clowning. Last year, she was awarded Clown of the Year for COAI. She received the Spirit and Alice B Awards from the Buffalo Clown Alley and the Nickelodeon Parents’ Picks Winner as the Best Children’s Entertainer in Buffalo in 2009. She won the individual COAI CHARLIE Award in 2015 and has competed, in addition to Lite Auguste, in Paradeability, Face Painting, and Balloon Art.

The heart of a clown is one which is sensitive, self-sacrificing, and fun, and these are all words which describe Connie Morrow. As her friend, Sue Marranconi, said, “Connie loves deeply with her clown heart.” She is supportive to those around her, easily willing to give of herself and her time to charitable causes and the clowning community, committed to excellence in her own skills and performances, and dedicated to educating the next generation of clowns.

# COAI AWARDS

## CLOWN OF THE YEAR

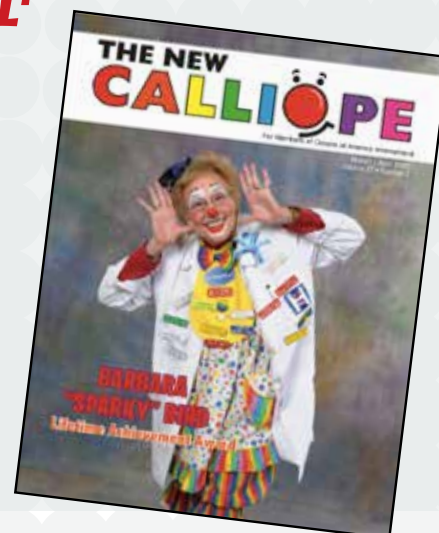
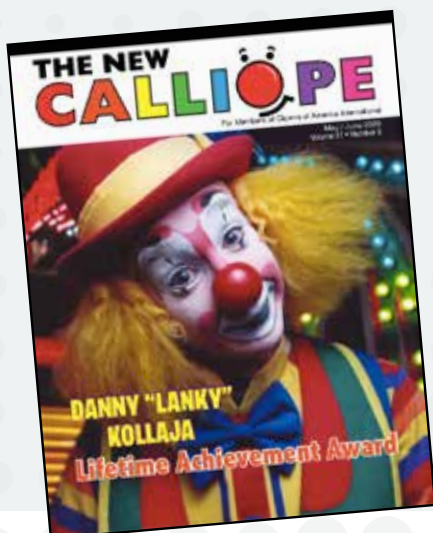
Connie “Punkin” Morrow was named Clown of the Year and was featured in the January/February 2020 issue, still available to all COAI members in The Vault at [www.mycoai.com](http://www.mycoai.com).



## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Barbara “Sparky” Bird, a 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, was featured on the March/April 2020 cover of *The New Calliope*, with a feature story about her amazing clown activities and travels.

Danny “Lanky” Kollaja, also a Lifetime Achievement Award winner, is featured in this issue of *The New Calliope*. Check out his fantastic feature story on page 4!



## CHARLIE AWARD

CHARLIE stands for Clowns Have a Real Love in Clowning—and this year’s alley winners went all-out to demonstrate their passion for the art during Clown Week, August 1–7, 2019.

### FIRST PLACE:

Niagara Falls Clown Alley

### SECOND PLACE:

San Diego All Star Clown Alley





## From the Director of Conventions

Frank Bunton

It is so odd to be writing this article at the end of March, not knowing what will be happening by the time you are reading this in May. Here's hoping everyone has kept safe and we are all able to get back to work.

Well, hello, all you clowns! How are you liking this issue of *The New Calliope*? It is the convention issue in which we post the pictures of the winners in Makeup, Skits (Group and Single), Paradeability, Face Painting, and Balloons. Oh! That's right! We didn't have a convention this year, thanks to the coronavirus! This was also supposed to be the year that you could meet the candidates at the convention who are running for office. Well, we are still including acknowledgments of some of our winners in this issue (Excellence in Clowning, Lifetime Achievement, Clown of the Year, and CHARLIE Award). They will also be recognized at the convention next year along with the 2021 winners.

Anyway, it was great that Niagara Clown Alley got to reschedule to next year (April 6-11) and save everyone from having to worry about whether or not they should

travel and what they needed to do to stay safe with this virus stuff going around. We had many positive comments from members thanking COAI for making the right decision in keeping everyone safe. Thankfully, the hotel is giving us the same rates for next year. This means that you should make your reservations as soon as possible so that you have a room at the convention hotel and not get placed in the backup hotel about a block away.

Good health to all and good luck through the summer!

And don't forget to vote for your Board of Directors! Login to your account at [www.mycoai.com](http://www.mycoai.com) and vote by June 7! **TNC**

(320) 963-6277

Have you seen the all new Mooseburger web site?

[www.mooseburger.com](http://www.mooseburger.com)

The advertisement features a central laptop displaying a rocket launch. To the right, a magnifying glass focuses on a clown logo labeled 'PRICILLA MOOSEBURGER ORIGINALS'. To the left, several circular logos are displayed: 'MOOSEBURGER CLOWN GLOWN ARTS EDUCATION', 'RED NOSE READER!', and 'The Joyful Journey'. A pair of cartoon eyes is positioned to the right of the magnifying glass.

# JUNIOR JOEYS

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



Hi, Junior Joeys!

I'm so excited to have a Teen Joey as a guest columnist in this issue. Some of you have met Gianna through our Junior Joeys Facebook group. She will share her journey in becoming a clown. I'm so proud of her, and I am proud of COAI for helping another new clown get started in this wonderful art form. Now, here's Gianna!

realized that this would not be happening. The rest of my school year was cancelled about a month after I first spoke to Regina. Without clowning, I know that my quarantine would have been much worse.

This time off has helped me learn new skills. I have been working on some magic tricks, juggling, and my project performance. I have also been fortunate enough to get in contact with a hospital clown, and I am considering becoming one—if I don't run away to the circus.

During my short time in COAI, I have learned many lessons, one of which was that it's okay to laugh at yourself. This was something I have been needing to learn for a while. Once I put on my clown shoes for the first time I was finally able to do so. Next, I learned that laughter is truly the best medicine. Finally, I learned that it doesn't matter what others think of you as long as you love what you are doing.

Through the encouragement of the clowns I have met, all of the fears that I first had vanished, and I felt free to release my inner clown. I am truly thankful that I have been given this platform to talk about my journey. I would like to thank everyone who has helped me by sending me a message, mentoring me, or sending resources that are helping shape my performance as a clown. I would also like to thank all those who are reading this article. You are helping me continue my clowning journey just by allowing me to share my story!

Finally, I would like to thank Ms. Regina from the bottom of my heart for everything she has done for me. I would not be the clown I am today without her help.

Bump a nose!



I love Gianna's enthusiasm for clowning and her willingness to take a chance by reaching out to us for help. 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](mailto:coaijrjoeys@gmail.com) or by phone at (503) 807-2584. **TNC**

## A Joey Can Dream: How One E-mail Changed My Life

By Gianna Albanese

March 19, 2020—that day will forever be known to me as the day my dream came true. That was the day I became a clown.

It all started when my teacher gave my drama class an assignment to write a report about our dream jobs and then give a small performance. All of the other kids in my class had dreams of becoming Broadway actors, but I wanted to be a clown.

Being a clown has been my dream since I saw my first Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus when I was three, and the dream had been in the back of my mind ever since. When I was told that we could pick whatever job we wanted for the report, I jumped right into the clown car and started my journey. I am extremely fortunate that I grew up in an environment where clowns were seen positively. This wasn't the case with most of my peers, who had biases against clowns due to recent events and the media.

At the time the project was assigned, I was very self-conscious and afraid to talk about my desire to become a clown. I went home to start my research, reaching out to various circuses and clown organizations for help when our state's quarantine began. I received a reply from COAI's Business Office Manager, Laurel Smith, who provided me with contact information for the Director of Junior Joeys, Regina Wollrabe, and suggested that I call her.

At first, I was scared to call Regina. I wasn't sure if she would be nice or understand my circumstances. I then began to nervously dial her number. That call would end up changing my life. I talked to Regina for nearly an hour that day about my journey in clowning, God, and my school project. As the call went on,

I felt more and more comfortable. When I told Regina that it would be hard for me to join COAI, she offered me a Junior Joeys scholarship. The second I got off of the line, I began to cry tears of joy—I was going to be a clown! Then Regina introduced me, Pixie, to my new, supportive clown family, the rest of the Junior and Teen Joeys on Facebook. All of their well wishes and messages helped me feel welcomed and accepted into a world that I wasn't that familiar with. Through the generosity of Junior Joeys and COAI board members, I received my costume and some paradeability props that I've been practicing with.

When I first got in contact with Regina during the early part of the quarantine, we both thought that we would be back to school within a couple of weeks. As time went on, we



# Are you in the right category as a clown?

By Richard Smith  
with Rachel Strnad



*In previous articles, I've gone in depth about the different makeup styles for each category of clown, along with various characters I've created in those categories. By this point, I hope you at least have a general idea what each category is like, but let's address this in more detail.*

When figuring out your clown character, whether for competition or for yourself, you will always be more effective the closer you fit with your chosen clown category.

How do you do this? The easiest way is to ask yourself the Three W's: Who are you? What is your character like? And Why do they do the things they do?

## Who are you?

This is more than your clown name. Figure out whether you are a child, a teenager, or an older person. What is your gender? The answers may be influenced by your personal age and gender, what traits of your personality come out when you are in clown, or what is needful for your audience. The same considerations influence your answers to the second two W's as well.

## What is your character like?

Is your character clumsy, brash, sharp-witted, doofy, a know-it-all? Again, maybe you have strong personality traits that you simply exaggerate in your clown character. Or, maybe you don't completely share the same traits as your clown character, but he or she allows you to become a different enough person that you can act against type. Your answer should be unique to you.

## Why does your character do the things he or she does?

If you were putting your character into a novel, what would their back story be? What has happened or is happening to your character to shape them into who they are? This question may seem unimportant on the surface, but it will give your character that much more richness and make them stand apart. It is especially important if you work with kids. Kids have such amazing imaginations; they will want to enter into the make-believe world of your character with questions. What an awesome moment you can create for them if you know your character enough to have answers at the ready! One other thing to keep in mind when considering this question is what will be appropriate and resonate with your audience. The things that make a hospital clown character



tick will be very different from those of a birthday party clown.

Once you've fleshed out the Three W's, you will have a much clearer idea what physical category best suits your character. Below, I've listed the categories the COAI recognizes for competitions. If you would like to compete, your clown character must fit within one of the categories. However, if you are simply trying to figure out the best category for you, there is a little bit of wiggle room.

### **Classic Whiteface**

This is the most elegant character, and also the control freak. He will almost never be found in the clown car, or sitting on the ground, or with pie on his face.

### **Comedy Whiteface**

A more out-going Classic Whiteface, though he is still the one cracking jokes and throwing pies rather than the butt of them.

### **The Auguste**

This is the rabble rouser, the most boisterous clown. He gets the pies, the falls, the water, the anything anyone can throw at him. In days of yore, he usually wore either oversized or too-tight clothes, though lately most Augustes are more put-together.

One note about this category. The Auguste clown can most easily shift grades of clowniness in the twenty-first century. Hence the Light Auguste sub-category, which uses minimal makeup. Others who are more follicularly inclined can easily wear Auguste makeup and still retain their beards without spoiling the look. If you are unsure how much makeup you want to wear or even how different you want your clown character to be from yourself, this may be a category to consider. Another category might be a character clown, which we will discuss below.

### **Tramp and Hobo**

I've gone into this character some in previous articles, but it's worth discussing again because there is quite a bit of

confusion between a Tramp and a Hobo nowadays, even among judges. This consequently causes much strife between judges and contestants.

So, briefly, a Hobo is usually a Happy Hobo, with the quirkiness of Red Skelton. Sure, he's down on his luck, but if you give him a spare dollar or an hour's work, he'd give you a cockeyed grin and thank you kindly. A tramp is a homeless person who is crushed by the world. He shuffles his feet and looks downtrodden. Often, he has resorted to scrounging or possibly pickpocketing, and the small items he has accumulated may be seen hanging about his person.

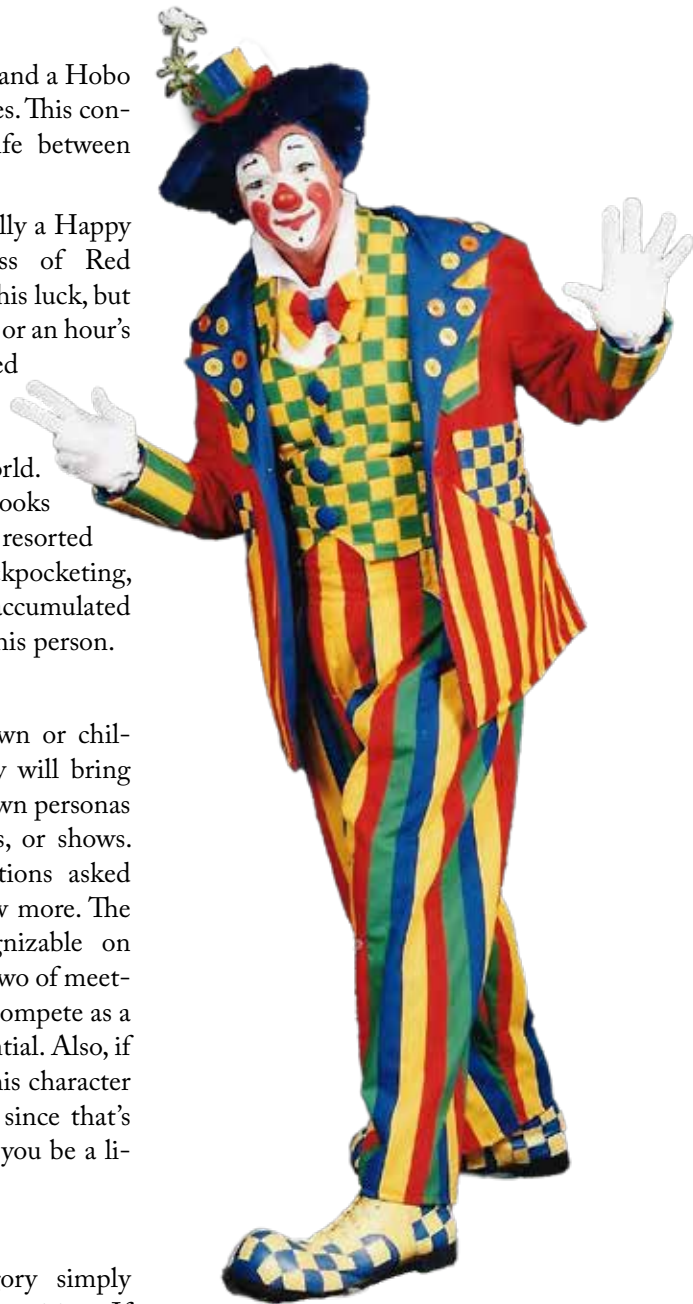
### **Character Clown**

If you are a working clown or children's entertainer, you likely will bring out one or two character clown personas for specific seasons, parades, or shows. Regardless, the same questions asked above apply, as well as a few more. The character should be recognizable on sight, or within a second or two of meeting you. If you are going to compete as a character clown, this is essential. Also, if you are going to compete, this character can't be a paradeability act, since that's a separate category, nor can you be a licensed character.

### **Senior**

I've included this category simply for those interested in competition. If you are over sixty-five, you may compete in this category as any one of the above-mentioned categories, whether or not you have competed in that regular category before.

And there you have it! With the Three W's answered and a good understanding of each type of clown, you are well on your way to creating your best clown persona. If you are still not sure or you would like to explore this process more, *The New Calliope* is a great place to look. Delve into our back issues in The Vault and look through the makeup tutorials or other articles written on specific categories. If anything I've put forward can



help you, I'm honored, but make sure your own taste comes first.

If you are interested in competing, check out each Convention issue, which has photos of all the winning clowns. This will give you an idea what the judges are looking for. However, I also recommend being very familiar with our competition guidelines, which are posted on the website.

If you have any questions about this or anything I've written, or you'd like to see something more, feel free to contact me on Facebook. You can also e-mail our editors at [thenewcalliope@gmail.com](mailto:thenewcalliope@gmail.com). **TNC**

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you there!  
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# From the Membership Director

Carrie "Shimmy Giggles" Ray

I hope everyone is safe and doing well. You have been on my mind and in my prayers. Hopefully, this virus will disappear, and we can go back to a somewhat normal life. It will still be very important to practice safe distancing, wash hands more frequently, sanitize, and be cautious when grabbing carts, gas nozzles, or doors. This will help keep the spread of the disease down and possibly save many peoples' lives.

International Clown Week is August 1-7. Please go to [www.mycoai.com](http://www.mycoai.com) for more information if you are planning to go after either the Individual or Alley CHARLIE Awards. You can also call or text me, as I'm available to help, too.

We need your help. We are in need of expanding our membership internationally and amongst minority populations. If you know anyone you could recommend as a new COAI member, please reach out to them and bring them on board. Also, if you're a member, please consider getting involved by becoming a member of the board or a COAI ambassador.

If you're interested in being an ambassador in your area, please contact the RVP of your area or me. We need many people to promote COAI. As you know, we are aging and need to take time to help teach, educate, and mentor new members in the art and history of clowning.

Don't forget to register for the 2021 COAI Convention. Connie and Jim have been working very hard to put it together. You know the two of them will be going all out to make it the best of the best conventions.

If you have any clown costumes, props, or anything else that you're wanting to get rid of, consider donating to the COAI Convention raffle. You can also donate money to go towards scholarships, Junior Joeys, or to the organization.

During the quarantine, everyone went crazy overbuying toilet paper. I ran across a fun clown craft you can do with children if you have extra toilet paper hanging around the house. Download the free printables from the Six Clever Sisters blog. There is no waste because you can even use the roll later!

Have fun and play it safe. TNC

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

# What Clowns Can Learn from the Quarantine

By Tricia “Pricilla Mooseburger” Manuel

None of us could anticipate something like the coronavirus crisis. I am a bit of a history buff. During the black plague they would actually nail shut infected people’s doors and windows so they could not get out and infect anyone else. They were just left to die, because there was no cure. I am sure some of us have felt nailed into our houses as well.

Life and clowning will not be the same as we know it. While a strain has been put on budgets, businesses, and relationships there has also been a bright side. I have noticed a lot of creativity going on online. I also switched gears and started recording more fun videos with my daughter Julia, making Mooseburger Minute tips, and producing some online classes. Here is what I learned.

1. When you are recording a video, turn your phone sideways. It makes for a better video.
2. Check your lighting before you record. You may need to turn on lights or, surprisingly, turn off lights.
3. Have some kind of fun backdrop, even if it is just your clown room or a fun piece of fabric attached to your living room curtain!
4. Check your angle. Make sure the camera is at eye level, not looking up your nose!
5. Don’t just give information. Print it off, make a big sign. If you can edit your video, put it on the screen, like a PowerPoint presentation.
6. Use props and visual aids to make your point.
7. Shorter is better. Long rambling dialogues lose people’s interest quickly. Get to the fun stuff as quickly as possible. I lose interest in about... ten seconds. Seriously. Oooh—shiny!
8. Have everything handy and ready to go. Do not leave the screen!
9. Leave your audience with a positive message. A fun quote, a tip, when they can expect to hear from you again. Be upbeat.
10. Don’t forget your contact information.

Our performing may change too. I doubt this country will get back to shaking hands any time soon. Think about how you touch your volunteers. We will be germophobes for a while to be sure. Instead of high fives, maybe elbow knocks! Forget about blowing up balloons by mouth (you should have stopped doing that a long time ago.) Showing your customers how you sanitize your brushes between faces will be a big thing. I am not a professional face painter, but I know it was more of an issue in the bigger cities before this, now it can be assumed it will be everywhere! Be prepared. Do some research.



The clown community—from conventions, to camps to vendors—will need your help. If it is on your bucket list to go to a convention or camp and you have the means to do it, *do it!* Don’t assume that these events will always be around. Lots of folks are taking it on the chin. Instead of ordering from Amazon, look in this magazine and help out a vendor who is supporting the organization. We are small businesses. Even a small order will help. We have families, a few employees, and we are all in it for the love of the art of clowning. If you can help, it will be appreciated.

It will take a while for things to get back to “normal.” Let’s not waste any time complaining about the good old days. Let’s look to the future and use our minds to move forward! We are some of the most creative people on the earth! So let’s get busy and use what we have learned in our quarantine. Most of all, let us continue to be grateful for what we do have, an amazingly beautiful, fun, and blessed way to communicate with each other behind our red noses.

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

# POCKETS'S

## More Merriment



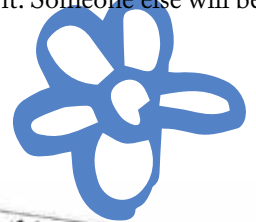
**Heather  
"Pockets"  
Wuersching**

My friend, Heather "Pockets" Wuersching has built up a sizable collection of Gag Bags. She became addicted to the concept more than a decade ago. Over the past couple of years, we have shared some of the collection, but recently, many have asked for more. She still insists that she is shy and introverted, and therefore, it would be easier for Twaddles to explain it to everyone. Yeah, right! Well, anyway, here we go again.

For Pockets, the bags are not just freebies to give away. They are props to help break the ice and initiate communication with the person in front of her. They provide the opportunity to get the person talking and laughing so that the moment will be recalled and spoken about for a long time to come. Pockets believes that she is

not just handing stuff out – she is trying to create memories.

Here are four great ideas that will be sure to excite your friends, family, and others when you tell them what you are about to give them. They may not be that excited when you hand it over, but hopefully, they will see the humour in it. Someone else will be sure to laugh if you get hit over the head with it.



**BEGINNER'S WEIGHTS:** Many people would benefit from some extra exercise and weight training, but it is important not to overdo it in the early stages. One must begin slowly with light weights. These beautifully balanced dumbbells are perfect to use when commencing workouts, and they may start to build up strength in the upper body.

In the bag are two Q-tips.



**ANTI-SELFIE MEDICATION:** They call it a selfie because "narcissistic" is too hard to spell. Too many of us are addicted to taking selfies. Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat are filled to overflowing. It is time to stop or at least slow down. Here is the perfect answer. This medication will help you reduce the urge to take yet another selfie.

For the medication, Pockets places a few Tic Tacs in the bag, but any small candies could be used.

# GAG BAGS

By Ted "Twaddles" White

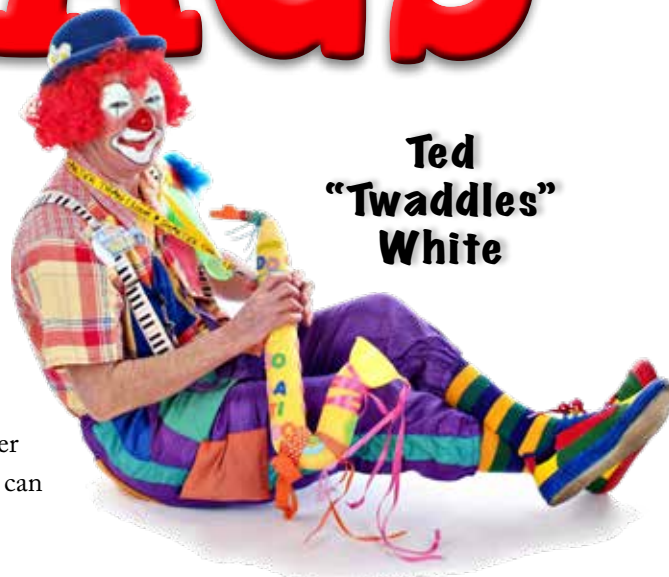
We have set up a page of four labels you can print and use if you do not want to design your own. Just e-mail me and ask for the PDF More Merriment Labels, and I will send the page to you. (The previous labels are still available if you want them, as well.)

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

What has she put in the bags now?

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

Ted "Twaddles" White has served as the COAI International RVP since 2014. Contact him by e-mail at [twaddles2014@hotmail.com](mailto:twaddles2014@hotmail.com). TNC

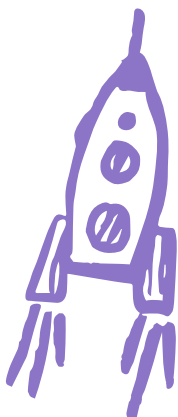


Ted  
"Twaddles"  
White



**SMALLEST JIGSAW:** Here is a challenge for the most serious jigsaw enthusiast. It's not only a small jigsaw, but one with tiny pieces.

These puzzle pieces are made by cutting coloured paper into tiny pieces. You could also use confetti.



**POCKETS' PERFECT STRESS RELIEF:**  
For immediate stress relief, pop three Stress Relief Capsules every four to six hours, or as needed.

In the bag is a four-by-six-inch piece of bubble wrap stapled onto the label. For the perfectionist, this is technically not a bag. If you want to be really picky, fold or roll the bubble wrap and insert it into a bag.

# Drafted into Clown Life

By Lisa H.



*My mother, Flower the Clown, in 1984.*

*The following essay was written by the daughter of Leslie Ann Akin. Lisa is now a tenured university professor who teaches art history. On the first day of classes, Lisa takes great pleasure in telling her students that her first job was as a clown's assistant, and her mother was the clown. Her students are amused and fascinated.*

The truth always comes out. Whether with colleagues or new friends, somehow I eventually incriminate myself to the point that I must reveal the unvarnished truth: my mother was a clown. I was about three years old when she started, so I don't clearly remember a time when my clown mother wasn't a fact of life. Hey, we all have weird family things.

"My mother was a clown." It is simultaneously just one factoid in an otherwise complex existence and part of the framework of my formative years. I was raised with Mehron Clown White, spirit gum, rainbow suspenders, orange wigs, white dress gloves, oversized red shoes, oversized silly bow-ties, oversized plastic glasses, oversized hot dogs and burgers with all the fixins, oversized money, oversized plastic combs, jumbo plastic scissors ("skizzers"), extra-large handkerchiefs, tiny hats, polka-dot everything, various puppets, fifty-gallon foam cowboy hats, out-of-commission old-timey telephones, juggling scarves, juggling balls, juggling bean bags, juggling rings, juggling clubs, neon-colored feather dusters, giant foam hands, invisible dogs on leashes, rubber chickens, gag barrels, bulb horns, pencil balloons in every possible color, and several hand pumps. That's just the stuff I can remember. I was not allowed to play with any of it, except maybe on Halloween. You can guess what I dressed up as.

At the beginning of third grade, my teacher went around the classroom asking students what their parents did. That was when I first told the story I would tell for the rest of my life, though it became more robust as time went on. When my turn came to answer the question, "What do your parents do?" I responded earnestly, "My mother is a clown and my dad sells drugs." She did a double take. There was a mild interrogation, then a phone call home. My clown mother confirmed it was true, but explained there was no need for alarm, that her husband—my father—is a pharmaceutical sales representative, and yes, she is a clown.

Not too long after, my clown mother performed at my school and the whole spectacle was filmed for a segment on a local television program, *P.M. Magazine*. It included less than a second of me beaming and laughing, looking like I was just about to roll on the floor. I was also sweaty and nervous and it showed. The kids in my grade and the younger ones were impressed and excited. I felt like a star, even if I didn't really do anything to deserve it. My mother being a clown wasn't really about me, but it was a big part of the environment I grew up in. Growing up on the fringes

of Clown Life, I am no stranger to the behind-the-scenes logic of performance.

In the early days, my clown mother performed at our local pizza parlor. My dad, brother, and I would go with her and bring home extra pies. Later, she twice performed at the White House and even has a day named after her clown persona in Washington, D.C. (Who says there are no clowns at the White House!)

When I was fairly young, maybe nine or ten, I was conscripted into goody bag service. In my abundant spare time, I assembled a variety of toys and treats into zip-top sandwich bags so the clown could give them to her eager audience at the end of a show. The rationale was clear. Goody bags were not for toddlers and had to be gender neutral so the clown could hand them out indiscriminately, with everyone getting the same things. They could not include anything kids could use to destroy the host's home (stickers, crayons, rubber stamps, etc.) and could not be boring (pencils, erasers, etc.).

I worked assembly-line style for the sake of efficiency. A green flyer in the form of an oversized dollar bill with the clown's picture on it went in first. Then, one at a time, some combination of a butterfly ring, wax lips, fortune-telling fish, wooden nickel, finger trap, plastic

# HARRY'S HILARITIES

kazoo, mini rubber ball, mini compass, Smarties candy roll, and if they were lucky, Groucho glasses, went into the bag. It wasn't difficult work, but it was tedious because all the bags had to be identical. One kid not getting a kazoo when all the other kids did might cause the kazoo-less child to feel like a chump, reflecting poorly on the clown. No pressure. At first, making them was something I did while watching TV—family-friendly child labor. When I got a little older and had other things I wanted to do, it became a (low-paying) job. Some weeks I assembled sixty goody bags, others I made one hundred fifty. Over the years, I probably assembled thirty-five thousand goody bags. If I never see wax lips again, it will be too soon.

Around the age of ten or eleven, the clown drafted me as an assistant. It's true. My first job was Clown's Assistant, although the actual work was that of a roadie and bouncer. I lugged props to and from the van and handled crowd control, so that when kids mobbed the clown after the show, I made sure they didn't manhandle the props or the rabbit. Yes, there was a rabbit. Its name was Vanilla the Wonder Bunny. Did I mention my mother was a magician?

My upbringing was also thumb tips, silks in all the colors, sponge balls, mini sponge bunnies, break-away fans, break-away magic wands, nesting wands, nesting cylinders, chick pans, restorable rope, mouth coils, magic Popcorn Dye Boxes, see-thru crystal cubes, wilting feather flowers, needle-thru balloons, bottomless glasses, linking rings, change bags, collapsible top hats, and the pagoda. The pagoda was an illusion box in which the clown would magically produce a rabbit. It was the show's big finale, meant to blow the kids' minds, which it usually did. In fact, I believe the rabbit was the primary reason the clown needed an assistant. It was dodgy to load the bunny in the pagoda and leave it in there for the length of a forty-five-minute show

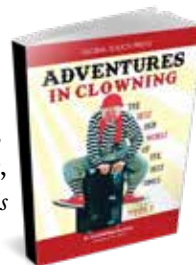
(especially in the summer heat), so she needed a roadie to prep the rabbit and pagoda right before the finale. Basically, I was responsible for keeping the show bunny alive. Again, no pressure.

My job also entailed gently setting and enforcing boundaries. The kids would get really worked up and want to talk to the clown and/or pet the rabbit. It was my job to keep the rabbit safe and children out of the props—you know, like a bouncer. A friendly bouncer. After the finale, I handed out goody bags and wrangled the props and bunny. The clown made balloons for the kids in the shape of a sword, flower, rabbit, swan, butterfly, giraffe, parrot on a swing, basic dog, dachshund, poodle (ooh-la-la!), or balloon hat (basic, helmet style, or with a flower on top). I loaded the van like a good little roadie and then we'd be off to the next gig.

The clown eventually had so much business that she assembled a stable of other local clowns and magicians that she booked for gigs she couldn't take on. When I was twelve years old, she occasionally lent me to those jokers as an assistant. By the time I was a teenager the novelty had worn off and assisting was definitely a job, but I did it until I was sixteen—and it has haunted me ever since. Throughout my adulthood, almost every time I've told someone my mother was a clown, the person exclaims some variation of, "Well, that explains it!" And although you may not know me personally, I assure you it's true.

We all have our weird family things; mine are just laughable. **TNC**

*"Drafted into Clown Life" will appear as a chapter in Leslie Ann Akin's book, Adventures in Clowning, Part 2, to be published this fall. For more information visit her website, [www.jestforclowns.com](http://www.jestforclowns.com).*



Here are some random comments for tricks that should get a laugh—or a least a grin or a groan! Have fun!

**Mind reading:** "Now concentrate—like orange juice!"

**Lota Bowl:** "You should see my water bill at the end of the month!"

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

**Balloon gag:** "Do my balloons break often? No, only once."

**Egg trick:** "Is there anyone in the audience who would lend me an egg? That's a silly question. If there were an egg out there, I would have gotten it by now."

**Pen trick:** "Feel this pen. Now it's a felt pen."

**Danger trick:** "Are you scared? Do you want to be?"

**Money trick:** "I have a twenty-dollar William. I haven't known it long enough to call it Bill."

**Money trick:** "I have a new way to make money. I forget who I borrowed it from."

**Vanishing a silk:** "It's wonderful what a little wave will do. [Wave silk.] Especially if it's a permanent wave. But when the wind blows, the wave is gone. [Blow on your hand.] Just like the handkerchief."



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

# Electric City Clown Alley #285 Celebrates Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

By Linda “Zippy” Gingold Seaman

In 1986, Bill “Snappy” Hart received a gift from his wife to attend clown school. Little did she know that she had just put in motion the development of the founder of a clown alley. By 1994, Bill Hart was teaching clown classes at the Schenectady Community College. The students wanted to meet on a regular basis to share each other’s company and clown skills, and that was the beginning of what became the Electric City Clown Alley (ECCA).

For twenty-five years, our Alley’s membership has grown and waned. The one constant has been that we have always endeavored to provide education, encouragement, and support for anyone within the Capital district of New York interested in learning the clown arts. We strive to provide services to the local community by supporting local health-related fundraisers in support of Double H Hole in the Woods Ranch (a camp for children with life threatening illnesses), Make A Wish, Juvenile Diabetes Research Walk, and the Capital Region Heart Walk. We provide entertainment through our Caring Clowns, who perform skits at local nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Many individual clowns provide entertainment services on a per diem basis.



In 1999, ECCA sponsored a Regional Clown Convention, and in 2002, the Alley hosted an International Clown Convention. Over the years, ECCA has been fortunate to have had many national COAI members provide professional development activities at our local Alley meetings and skill-development events. For example, Bob “Bunky” Gretton and Teresa “Blondi” Gretton provided two full days of fun and classes in 2009. In 2018, Bill “Dabbles” Le Blanc, the Northeast Regional VP, taught our Alley how to create props. Jackie “Lollibells” Garner provided two days of skills and stories in 2018. Most recently, to help



Above: Tom “Mac N Tosh” Person ballooning at the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Walk in 2010. Right: Barbara “Sparky” Bird and Linda “Zippy” Gingold Seaman doing face painting at Double H Hole In The Woods Ranch in 2010.





Left to right: William "Billy" Vaughn. Marie "Mischief" Beck

celebrate our twenty-fifth anniversary in August 2019, three of our own ECCA members provided a full day of professional development activities. William "Billy" Vaughn provided instruction on balloons and how to make things funnier, Marie "Mischief" Beck demonstrated how to perform at a birthday party, and Barbara "BJ" Field taught how to work with puppets, as well as use movement to be more visually funny.

Over the past twenty-five years, ECCA has participated in many

International Clown Week activities and won the COAI CHARLIE Award in 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2010. We have been fortunate to have many recipients of the COAI awards amongst our membership. Marie "Mischief" Beck and Lorice "Auntie Swizzle" Bolde have both won the Individual CHARLIE Award.

Many of our members have been featured on the cover and in articles of *The New Calliope* over the years for their COAI awards. Each of the members

listed below have not only been featured for their noteworthy accomplishments, but each has been a dynamic leader in our Alley's clown community. Each one has been a teacher, mentor, and role model.

The following members received the Lifetime Achievement Award: Paul "Fuddi Duddy" Kleinberger (2017), Marie "Mischief" Beck (2019). Excellence in Clowning was awarded to Loretta "LaDeeDah" DeAngelus and Marie "Mischief" Beck (2008) and Miram "Senorita Soto" Kleinberger and Bill "Snappy" Hart (2009). Best of Press was awarded to Paul "Fuddi Duddy" Kleinberger, Editor of the ECCA Red Nose News. Clown of the Year was awarded to Marie "Mischief" Beck (1999), Loretta "LaDeeDah" DeAngelus (2000), Bill "Snappy" Hart (2001), Nancy "Rowdy" Rosekrans (2002), Cathy "TOTS" Mackey (2005), and Barbara "Sparky" Bird (2011). Paul "Fuddi Duddy" Kleinberger was on *The New Calliope* cover as President of COAI (2006-2008). In addition, many of our clowns listed above have been featured in *The New Calliope* for their placement in the top ten in competition for makeup and costumes, paradeability, face painting, balloons, and skits. Our alley is very lucky to still receive guidance from this group of clowns.

In 2019, Bill "Snappy" Hart, our ECCA founder, was given the Ring of Honor Award. Bill's wife and the ECCA are very grateful for this award. We miss Bill for his leadership, his camaraderie, and his skills, but most of all, we miss his joyful presence. He was a wonderful role model and mentor. We are honored that this award represents Bill's hard work within a COAI Clown Alley and his love of the clown arts. It is ironic that this exceptional award was received within the year of our twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations.

Contact Linda "Zippy" Gingold Seaman at [linda.seaman84@gmail.com](mailto:linda.seaman84@gmail.com).



Barbara "BJ" Field (center) with her Alley friends, Patty "Patty Cake" Knee and Linda "Zippy" Gingold Seaman, and their puppets.

# 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.



## Lisa “Happy the Clown” Kraemer

Lisa Evangeline Kraemer, 54, of Ettrick, Wisconsin, died Saturday, February 1, 2020. Lisa was born Dec. 10, 1965, in Milwaukee, to Dianne and Robert Kraemer. Lisa lived with her great-aunt and uncle, Sara and Leland Clair, from 1969 to 2004, in rural Ettrick. She then lived with her caregiver family for the past six years, Randy and Kristy Matalas of rural Merrillan. Lisa is survived by her parents and four brothers: Wade (Anne) Kraemer, John Kraemer, Brad (Michelle) Kraemer, and her twin brother, Greg (Mary Beth) Kraemer; plus, many nieces and nephews. Lisa was preceded in death by an infant brother, Craig Robert; grandparents, Keith and Cecile Hardie, Herbert and Evelyn Kraemer; and aunt and uncle, Sara and Leland Clair. Everyone was special to Lisa, and she leaves a legacy of love to so many whose lives she touched.

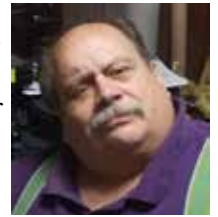


## JOE “TINY” LUCE

Joe “Tiny” Luce, 63, of Houston, Texas, passed away March 27 from a stroke. Joe was a beloved member of Houston’s Cheerful Clown Alley and will be greatly missed. He

served as a board member and the co-chair for Clown School and did much for the art of clowning. Joe was given a virtual Last Walk-around on Facebook, with many members sharing their memories and love for him.

Joe especially enjoyed clowning for the hospital and other charities in the community. He also devoted his time to teaching and mentoring other clowns, many of whom remember him fondly and will continue to carry on his legacy in their own clowning.



## NORINE “FLOWER” NORTON

Norine Norton, known as “Flower the Clown,” died April 18, 2020, at the age of 74. A long-time family entertainer, Flower called Whitesboro, New York, home and was a truly entertaining dynamo throughout Central New York for over twenty-five

years. Although retired for ten years, she remained an influence within the North American clown community, attending conventions and clown meetings, supporting alley functions, and sharing her many experiences. During her career, Flower was a staple at events such as the Shrine Circus, Syracuse’s Kid’s Fest, and the Oswego County Fair. She was frequently seen in the company of Bob and Cathy Gibbons and often joined forces with the Shrine clowns in the area. Flower was known for her many guest appearances and her winning ways. She was recognized many times for her active charity involvement and was often featured on Spectrum/Time-Warner News for her activities in Central New York.



Photo Courtesy of The Post-Standard



# CLOWN COMICS

## THREE WISHES

By Ann "Tuttles" Sanders

★ Starring: Kathy "Sparkles" McPherson, Evelyn "Giggles" Smith, Courtney "Dally" Harris, Harold "Ducky" Wood  
Kolonial Klowns of Williamsburg – Alley #357

Photos by Tim "Sawdust" Laynor



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## DAVID GARRARD'S SKETCH-O-MAGIC

Show a sketch pad of a dozen different faces. The pages are cut into three segments—forehead, eyes and nose, and mouth. Show the audience how you can create a variety of funny faces by flipping to different segments of the pages.



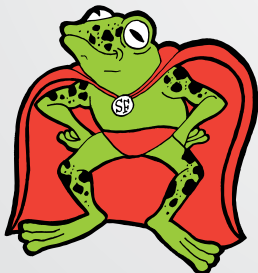
Ask three spectators make random selections as you flip through the book, stopping at the top of a head from one picture, eyes and a nose from another picture, and a mouth from another. Another spectator opens an envelope you previously gave him. He pulls out a picture—and it matches perfectly the audience's selection!

Strong, visual magic that gets the audience involved. Great for close-up or stage. You'll flip over it! **\$25**

## SAMMY SMITH'S SUPER FROG

Show a picture of Super Frog wearing his hero cape. Slide him into an envelope, and give it to a magic helper for safekeeping. Then display an empty envelope and give it to another helper. Say the magic words, and Super Frog will jump from one envelope to the other ... or will he?

This cute and highly visual trick with a twist ending is easy to perform, and printed in three colors on high-quality materials. Made to last! **\$20**



## SAMMY SMITH'S DEJA ZOO



A completely baffling trick for kid shows or grown-up audiences! No skill required!

Show a set of animal flash cards, each with a different zoo animal—Zebra, Kangaroo, Giraffe, Elephant, Lion, Tiger, Panda Bear, Snake, etc. The cards are large enough to be seen from a distance.

Two people in the audience THINK of an animal. You pick up two blank cards and make a quick sketch of the animals you believe they have thought about.

Your predictions are placed on a wooden display stand. When you turn the stand around, you have correctly guessed the two animals. You're a genius!

Absolutely no artistic skill is required! You never actually have to draw anything. The trick is gimmicked and ready to use right out of the package!

Everything is supplied: gimmicked cards, marker, card stand, and a routine by Samuel Patrick Smith. **\$35**

## SAMMY SMITH'S PUFF THE MAGIC RABBIT

One of our most-requested items, this is part of our "Sammy Signature" series, and comes complete with a quality hand puppet and Sammy Smith's original "Puff the Magic Rabbit" routine word-for-word. **\$40**



## SILLY BILLY'S MAGIC PARTY PICTURE

Turn any child in your audience into a magical artist! Show a simple, black-and-white drawing of a room set up for a birthday party, except there are no balloons, decorations, presents, or birthday candles. Have your volunteer write his name across the cake, draw candles on it, and write his age on a party hat in the crayon colors of his choice. Then he holds the picture facing away from the audience while they all say the magic words. When he turns the picture around, balloons, presents, and decorations have appeared in full color in the drawing! **\$20**



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