

# THE NEW CALLIÖPE

For Members of Clowns of America International

Volume 40 • Number 5

*Clown  
Of The  
Year*



**ALENE  
"RUFFLEZ"  
KRAUS**

# Your COAI Officers

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



**President**  
Adam Schill  
2219 Jolinda Ct.  
Columbus, IN 47203  
812-525-7429  
adam@bigtopproductionsllc.com



**Vice President**  
Dan Langwell  
10550 Star Avenue  
Osceola, IN 46561  
574-904-9643  
fitzwilly.coai@gmail.com



**Secretary**  
Beth "Pickles" Cedarholm  
1450 River Ridge Rd.  
River Falls, WI, 54022  
715-426-0774  
clownypickles@gmail.com



**Treasurer**  
Jerry "Bogo" Gill  
321-610-3193  
1492 Goldrush Ave  
Melbourne, FL 32940  
jerrymgill@cfl.rr.com3

## DIRECTORS



**Alley Region Support**  
Gloria Sterrett  
401 N. Washington St.  
Delphi, IN 46923  
765-564-9604  
heysedbyccmdolli@yahoo.com



**Conventions**  
Kynisha Ducre  
Bay Area, California  
clowninaroundtown@gmail.com



**Education**  
Jim Donoughe  
1140 Linwood Ave  
Niagara Falls, NY 14305  
MrJim67@aol.com  
Cell 716-471-3684



**Junior Joey**  
Regina Wollrabe  
503-807-2584  
coaijrjoey@gmail.com



**Membership**  
Keshia Beckley  
Post Office Box 6051  
Fredericksburg, VA 22403  
571-982-0875  
ladylolafp@yahoo.com

## REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS



**Northeast**  
Connie Morrow  
98 Woodward Drive  
West Seneca, NY 14224  
716-675-6892  
punkin@punkintheclown.com



**North Central**  
Sara "Special K'z" Kreutz  
P.O. Box 454 Holstein, IA, 51025  
712-369-0809  
sarakreutz@yahoo.com



**Northwest**  
Alyse Axford  
116-A Sudden Valley Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229-7751  
360-647-9229  
sales@zigzag-ragz.com



**Mideast**  
Bobby Semon  
308 Harrier St.  
Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
757-424-1288  
bobby@bobbytheclown.com



**Midwest**  
Patti Ummel  
225 John Drive  
Bartlett, IL 60103  
630-817-2019



**South Central**  
Matty Spraggins  
1668 Chesterwood Drive  
Rockwall, Tx 75032  
972-746-8455  
magicalmattyfun@gmail.com



**Southeast**  
Position Open



**Southwest**  
Sarah Smith  
3175 North Price Rd. Apt 1247  
Chandler, AZ 85224  
719-334-2793  
pcsarahjane@yahoo.com



**Canada**  
Dale McKenzie  
867 Raynard Crescent SE  
Calgary, AB T2A 1X6  
403-273-9047 (H)  
403-606-7750 (C)  
funehappenings@shaw.ca



**Latin Countries**  
Angel "Jobolin" Morales  
24 RR5 Jaradines De Caparra  
Bayamon, Puerto Rico 00959  
787-565-3205  
jobolin2008@aol.com



**International**  
Chia-chiao Lin  
No.935, Fuke Rd., Xitun Dist.  
Taichung  
Taiwan  
Linchiachiao@gmail.com

## STANDING COMMITTEES

**Audio Visual:** Marilyn Barrett, 407-844-2862 • klownekop@prodigy.net.

**Awards Advisory Council (AAC):** Teresa Gretton (Chair), 301-843-8212 • tgretton@verizon.net. Bob Gretton, Angel Ocasio, Mike Cox.

**Budget:** Adam Schill, 812-525-7429. Jerry Gill. Sammy Smith.

**Bylaws and Rules:** Ted White (Chair) • twaddles2014@hotmail.com • Cleon Babcock, Dale McKenzie.

**Clown Week:** Teresa Gretton • 301-843-8212 • tgretton@comcast.net.

**Competition:** Shirley Lee, John Kral, Paula Le Blanc, Bob Gretton, Ann Sanders.

**Ethics and Grievance:** Paul Kleinberger (Chair), 518-438-0775 • fuddiduddy@aol.com.

**Finance:** Adam Schill, 812-525-7429. • adam@bigtopproductionsllc.com. Jerry Gill. Alyse Axford, Angel Morales, Sammy Smith, Regina Wollrabe.

**Good Cheer:** Bonnie Corcia • bonkygbird@gmail.com • 732-718-5840

**Historian:** Teresa Gretton, 301-843-8212 • tgretton@comcast.net.

**International Ambassador Program:** Bob Gretton, 301-843-8212 • bunkytclown@comcast.net.

**Junior Joey:** Regina Wollrabe (Director), 503.807.2584, coaijrjoey@gmail.com. Sara Kreutz, Bobby Semon, Beth Cedarholm, Dale McKenzie, Keshia Beckley, Jim Donoughe

**Membership:** Teresa Gretton (Chair), 301-843-8212 • gretton@verizon.net. Bob Gretton.

**Parliamentary Procedure Advisor:** Cleon Babcock, 515-314-2967 • ccbabcock@aol.com.

**Public Relations:** Bonnie Love, 619-282-9668 • bonbonsandiego@yahoo.com.

**Scholarship:** Jim Donoughe (Chair), 716-471-3684 • MrJim67@aol.com



The mission of Clowns of America International is to organize all members desiring to pursue the honorable profession or art of clowning, the dedication toward its advancement, and the education of its members.

**COAI Business Office**

Post Office Box 122  
Eustis, Florida 32727

Telephone:  
1-352-357-1676

Hours: Tuesday–Thursday  
11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (EST)  
E-mail: coaioffice@aol.com  
Website: www.mycoai.com

**Magazine Production**  
SPS Publications, Inc.

**Editorial Assistants**  
Beth Hammock  
Lauren Jurgensen

**Graphic Design**  
Jessica Friend

**Creative Consultant**  
Regina “Cha Cha” Wollrabe

Send articles for consideration to  
[thenewcalliope@gmail.com](mailto:thenewcalliope@gmail.com).  
Send ads and advertising inquiries to  
[advertising@mycoai.com](mailto:advertising@mycoai.com).

The New Calliope (ISSN 1072-1045) is published bi-monthly (January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, November/December) by COAI, 800 South Ave., Eustis, Florida 32726. Periodicals Postage Paid at Eustis, Florida, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The New Calliope, COAI Business Office Manager • Post Office Box 122, Eustis, Florida 32727.

The New Calliope articles are protected by U.S. copyright and international treaties and may not be copied without the express permission of Clowns of America International, which reserves all rights. Re-use of any of The New Calliope editorial content and graphics online, in print, or any other medium for any purpose is strictly prohibited.

© 2023 COAI

Clowns of America International, Inc.

COVER PHOTO BY  
DENIDA SULAJ SEYBERT

# THE NEW CALLIOPE

## OUR COVER

**4** Clown of the Year: Alene “Rufflez” Kraus  
Lauren Jurgensen

## HOW-TO

**12** Junior Joeys: Beginning Hat Tricks Regina “Cha Cha” Wollrabe

**14** Three Easy Ways to Get the Attention of Kids Bri Crabtree

**16** Pirate Party Improv Regina “Cha Cha” Wollrabe

**20** 33 Things Children Enjoy David Ginn

**24** Frog Lollipop Merrily Johnston

**25** No Peeking! Ann “Tuttles” Sanders

## INSPIRATION AND HUMOR

**15** Sixty Years as Bobby the Clown Bobby Semon

**19** 25 Years Ago in The New Calliope  
Regina “Cha Cha” Hernandez

**26** The Winter Quarters Ron Severini

**30** The Kidshow Way: Take Pride in What You Do! Skip Way

**31** Clown Comics Ann “Tuttles” Sanders

## OFFICIAL BUSINESS

**7** From the President Adam Schill

**8** 2024 COAI Convention Schedule

**32** Leave a Legacy

## NEWS

**14** 2024 COAI Convention Notice

**29** The Last Walk-Around

## MISCELLANEOUS

**2** Officers, Directors, and Committees

**27** Welcome, New Members

**30** Our Good Cheer List



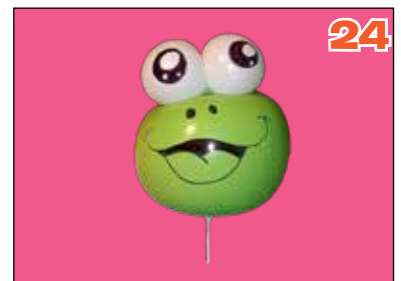
4



15



16



24



25

### Permanent Membership Cards

Membership cards sent out by the COAI Business Office are intended to be permanent, so no expiration date is included. Your card is valid only as long as you are a current member. In years past, a new membership card was generated and mailed each year. During the pandemic, the COAI Board of Directors voted to discontinue that practice as a cost-saving measure. If your card is damaged or lost, you may still request a replacement.

# ALENE KRAUS: 2024 COAI CLOWN OF THE YEAR

By Lauren Jurgensen

Long before Alene “Rufflez” Kraus was mentoring and inspiring her fellow clowns, she was teaching Spanish to middle schoolers in Macungie, Pennsylvania. The Philadelphia native has always been a devoted teacher, but only became a clown in the more recent years of her life. In fact, Alene chose clowning as a new and challenging way to make the most of her free time after moving in 2011 to The Villages retirement community in sunny Florida.

“I learned about clown alley, and thought it might be like teaching middle schoolers, so I joined,” Alene said. “I taught in a middle school for well over twenty years. In my first three years I taught in the city of Camden, New Jersey. This opportunity provided challenges, and learning and teaching experiences, that were both heartwarming and devastating. As the kids and I began to smile and laugh at the same things, their willingness to learn turned a big corner. Trust, humor, acceptance, and kindness have a powerful effect when combined with caring and knowledge of what we each carry with us. It was my first lesson in ‘Know Your Audience.’ Today, former students and colleagues bring their children and grandchildren to see me when I perform nearby. It is a pretty cool circle of life.”

Alene’s local clown alley was The Villages Clown Alley 179, where she attended clown school and made her first attempt at clown makeup—an auguste look with a long, curly blue wig and flowered jump suit. “I stuffed my pockets so full, I am pretty sure I waddled at my first public event!” she joked, describing her clown character Rufflez as a more visible version of her own personality. The Villages Alley still boasts over one hundred members and raises several thousand dollars every year for local nursing homes, schools, hospice facilities, and the nonprofit organization Kids Beating Cancer. Alene has also done community service for the Parady Cares Foundation, which supports children, veterans, and senior citizens of Florida who are in need, and has volunteered for several more organizations, including the March of Dimes.

While a member of Clown Alley 179, Alene served as its education director, vice president, and president. She has also given her time as the Director of Education for COAI (2020 – 2022), Director of Education for MACA (2022 – present), Director of Eastern Pennsylvania for MACA (2017 – 2021), and Recording Secretary for MACA (2019 – 2021). Then there are the countless committees and responsibilities she’s taken on at COAI and MACA conventions: finding and negotiating contracts with the best instructors and vendors, organizing open mic nights, overseeing the official schedule, and making herself available to troubleshoot any problems that arise.



Alene can also be found with her therapy dog, Papi, who she described as a sweet and gentle poodle and shih tzu mix. “We visit schools, senior facilities, and his favorite, hospitals,” said Alene. “Papi is most effective in hospitals. I often joke that I am only along because he cannot yet drive! He jumps out of the car and is instinctively ready. And, if I let go of the leash, he knows exactly where to go and to whom. I have seen him turn the emotion in a hospital room to laughs, and I have seen him need to lie with someone actively dying. It is impressive to see what these therapy dogs instinctively do.”

Once Alene had become a skilled clown, it was inevitable that the former schoolteacher would want to share her knowledge with other clowns. In 2014, just three years after she’d started clowning, she was already teaching clown



*The real me. I'm a happy girl!*



LuLu, Georgie, LayDee, and Rufflez and the 40th anniversary of MACA, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Swing, batter, batter!

workshops—offering advice, mentorship, and support to joeys as they gathered, experimented with fresh ideas, and developed their characters and skits. “I love seeing that *aha* moment when a fellow clown takes something I do, puts a twist on it, and makes it their own! That’s a bingo!” said Alene, adding that she knows what it feels like to struggle in her craft. “The challenges I’ve faced in clowning have been twofold. The first is to get out of my head with the ‘what if’ questions. What if I forget, what if I mess up, what if my nose falls off? I now always have plans B, C, and D in my pocket.”

Alene began teaching clowns in 2012. Among the first courses she ever taught were Beginners’ Balloon Twisting, Caring for Your Wig, Makeup and

Pick Your Nose, and Who and How to Approach. From 2014 to 2016, she taught Clowning 101 at The Villages College of Lifelong Learning. By 2020, she was teaching Easy Magic for Clowns and Easy Walkarounds. “Whether teaching, performing, or working an event, she always gives one hundred ten percent,” said John Kral, President of MACA. “Her love for the art and desire to share her passion for clowning with others is evident in the many classes she teaches. I have attended her classes at MACA as well as COAI, having seen firsthand her enthusiasm and sense of humor in the classroom.” Alene, who can also communicate in Spanish, said that she loves the international friends and contacts she’s made through COAI.



I love me somebunny.

Many joeys have described her as not only energetic and enthusiastic, but as someone who works nonstop to keep clown conventions running as smoothly as possible. Friend, COAI member, and professional clown coach Leslie Ann Akin seemed to agree. “The most endearing qualities Alene holds are profound leadership qualities and a huge heart for people, along with her ability to be present for making positive changes. Alene is a brilliant leader. She checks her ego at the door, offering her best without considering strategies for her advancement in the clown world. She gets the work done.”

At conventions, Alene can be seen zooming about, doing everything from typical committee work to preparing and executing auctions, overseeing the registration table, coordinating hotel rooms, and taking care of special guests. Before one convention is even over, she’s already working to recruit instructors and vendors for the next year. “She leaves no detail to chance,” added Kral.

Alene said one of her favorite—and funniest—clowning memories is from the time when she and her alley were returning home from a gig for Kids Beating Cancer. They were still on the bus when she realized she was feeling dehydrated from all the physical exertion. “The bus driver called for an ambulance and pulled over to the side of the road on the Florida Turnpike. Florida Highway Patrol officers shut down the road. The ambulance arrived and the EMTs boarded the bus. They asked me if I could walk off the bus, and I told them I wasn’t sure. That’s when the fun began! Forty-seven brightly costumed clowns, all in their finest, had to exit the bus and stand on this grassy area, looking incredibly beautiful,” Alene said. “Folks were now getting out of cars to take photos of the forty-seven clowns, while EMTs were carrying me out of the bus and onto the shoulder of the road. I had on a huge dress and looked like a tablecloth overhanging the stretcher. We made the



Alene, full blast ahead! Snow people waiting for the Skippack Tree Lighting. Alene and Papi.



Rufflez and HopScotch (Janet Comesky), best friends since clown school. One of Skippack's store owners of Le Butler's Pantry donates a prize for a local fundraiser.

papers, the news, and I turned out to be fine.”

Alene seldom competes yet enthusiastically supports anyone who enjoys participating in formal competitions, said her friend Ann “Tuttles” Sanders. But competitive or not, Alene has been the recipient of several awards: Second Place in Group Skits at SECA (2015), Best Balloon Elephant at MACA (2019), and the COAI President’s Award (2022). She’s a published author, too. Alene’s writings include the *New Clown Orientation Manual and Guide for Mentors and Mentees* for Clown Alley 179, as well as several articles in *The New Calliope*, which often covered topics like mentorship and mental health. In 2022, she even published an article in *Jest for Clowns* about her experience as a female clown.

When she isn’t teaching, writing, or keeping conventions running strong, Alene is an active and passionate performer in and around her hometown of Skippack, Pennsylvania. Her performances have earned her recognition and mentions in several hometown Pennsylvania newspapers, as well as a 2015 cover story for *Best of Ocala*.

She values the younger generations, who she believes are the future of the world. “They deserve positive direction and compassion from all adults,” she said. “I especially try to be a positive influence on kids and leave them with a message of confidence.”

It should come as no surprise, then, that Alene has said “optimistic” is the one word she’d use to describe herself. She spreads that infectious optimism to everyone she meets, including the very clown community who has chosen her as this year’s COAI Clown of the Year.

“I value everyone I have met in my life,” Alene said. “I did not succeed alone as a student, a mom, a teacher, a member of a drug, alcohol, and mental health team, a single mom, a car salesperson, a fundraiser, a friend, a mom-mom, a widow, a mentor, or a clown without the assistance or support of others. It is important to me to honor that. I’m blessed with a unique support team of seasoned clowns and newer clowns. I appreciate each and every one of you, and I care about each and every one of you. I am proud and honored to be voted Clown of the Year! Go out there and make ‘em smile and laugh.” **TNC**



## From the President

Adam Schill

Hello, COAI! We are getting down to the wire on planning for the convention! Keep those registrations coming in. I am excited to see you all and meet those of you who I have not met before. Chagy is going to be amazing, and I cannot wait to see what he has planned for his classes and his show. You will not want to miss it. I am also excited to see how our changes play out with the new contests and combining certain competitions. If you have not registered yet, make sure you do so, as the sooner you register, the less you will pay for your registration! Go to page 8 for the current schedule and you'll see why you need to be there! For more information on classes and instructors, and for schedule updates, go to [www.coaiconvention.com](http://www.coaiconvention.com). See you in May!

### CONGRATULATIONS TO ALENE

When Alene was our COAI Director of Education, for the first half of my presidency, we talked almost daily—especially as we planned the 2022 convention in

Atlanta. Alene saved my sanity more than once as she was an excellent person to bounce ideas off of and consult with for when there were issues that needed to be tackled by the board. I am thrilled that she was chosen as Clown of the Year. Congratulations, Alene! **TNC**






We are super excited to announce that we have set up an

## online merchandise store

for all of the coolest COAI gear to make your friends jealous! At the moment we have three different designs, with many different merchandise options for those designs. A portion of all sales comes back to support COAI and help us to keep dues low and provide quality benefits for our members! We have everything from T-shirts, sweatshirts, onesies, phone cases, mugs—you name it! Everything is available in men's, women's, children's, and babies' sizes. And they all come in a huge rainbow of different colors! You can check it out at [www.teespring.com/stores/coai](http://www.teespring.com/stores/coai).








# The 2024 COAI Convention Schedule

Niagara Falls, New York • May 13–17, 2024

Time	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Ballroom	Dealer Room	Registration Desk
<b>Sunday, May 12</b>					
3:00-7:00				Dealer Setup	Early Registration
<b>Monday, May 13</b>					
8:00-10:30				Dealer Setup	Registration Open
10:30-12:00			Competition Sign Up Table Open		
12:00-1:00	Lunch On Your Own				Lunch
1:00-2:00	<b>I Play In Church</b> Kynisha Ducre	<b>Make a Memory Paper Roses</b> Bunky Gretton		Dealers Open	Registration Open
2:00-2:15	15 Minute Break				
2:15-3:15	<b>Designing your Own Routines</b> Joselin Gonzalez	<b>Christmas Performer's Workshop</b> Paula Biggio			
3:15-4:00	BREAK		<b>Mentor Program Welcome for First Time Attendees</b> COAI Board		
4:00-5:00	<b>The Joy of Sox (Puppets)</b> Jim Donoughe	<b>Balloon Games</b> Dave Hill	Competition Sign Up Table Open	Dealers Closed	
5:00-6:30	Dinner On Your Own				
6:30-7:30			Dealer Show		
7:30-?	<b>Balloon Jam</b> (Clean Up After Yourselfs!)	<b>Face Paint Jam</b> (Clean Up After Yourselfs!)	<b>Performance Jam/Open Mic</b> Try out your newest material to see how it plays for an audience.	Dealers Open Late Night	
9:30-?	Hospitality Room Open				
<b>Tuesday, May 14</b>					
Time	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Ballroom	Dealer Room	Registration Desk
7:30-8:30	Hospitality Room Open				

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

8:30-9:30	<b>Puppet Routines That Get Reactions</b> Matty Spraggins	<b>Monster Face Painting and Other Tips</b> Merrily Jonston				Dealers Open	Registration Open
9:30-9:45	15 Minute Break						
9:45-10:45	No Class	No Class	<b>Headliner Keynote: The Heart of a Clown</b> Chagy				
10:45-11:00	15 Minute Break						
11:00-12:00	<b>Humor Therapy in Long Term Facilities</b> Barbara Bird	<b>Introduction to Airbrushing</b> Susan Crenshaw					
12:00-1:00	Lunch On Your Own						
1:00-2:00	<b>Clowning Outside The Box</b> Racine Celeste	<b>Large, Lite and Laughable</b> Bob Gretton					
2:00-2:30	Break						
2:30-3:30	<b>Storytelling For Clowns</b> Paula Biggio	<b>Big Laughs for Little People</b> Sammy Smith			Dealers Open	Registration Open	
3:30-4:00	Break						
4:00-5:00	<b>Pocket Bubbles</b> Coco Clare	<b>Mime and Movement</b> Bill Baldwin					
5:00-6:30	Dinner On Your Own						
6:30-7:30			Face Painting Challenge				
7:30-8:30	<b>How To Write New Patter For Old Tricks Or Bits</b> Dan Langwell	<b>Ventriloquism 101, 102</b> Jackie Reynolds					
8:30-10:00			Group Skit Performance Jam/ Open Mic				
10:00	Hospitality Room Open - Hosts Electric City Clowns						
<b>Wednesday, May 15</b>							
Time	Dallas F	Dallas H	Dallas C&E		Houston Ballroom	Registration Desk	
7:30-8:30	Hospitality Room Open						

8:30-9:30	<b>The Grand Finale, Entertaining Seniors</b> Captain Visual	Introduction to Balloons Adam Schill		Dealers Open	Registration Open
9:30-10:00	Break				
10:00-11:00	<b>Holiday Revamp Not a Total Redo</b> Punkin & Donuts	<b>Make Yourself Memorable</b> Bill Baldwin			
11:00-11:15	Break				
11:15-12:15	<b>Is This Thing On?</b> Myke Hutchings	<b>Pocket Full Of Laughter</b> Mary Langwell			
12:15-1:15	Lunch On Your Own				Registration Closed
1:15-2:15	<b>Summer Fun For Kids</b> Connie Morrow	<b>World's Best Walkaround Entertainment</b> Dave Hill		Dealers Closed	Registration Open
2:15-2:30	Break				
2:30-4:00			General Membership Meeting		
4:00-5:00			<b>Headliner Lecture: How To Walk, Talk, and Smell Like a Clown</b> Chagy		
5:00-7:30	Dinner on your own				
7:30-8:30			<b>2024 Headliner Show with Chagy</b>		
9:00-11:00	Hospitality Room - Hosts COAI Board Meet the Candidates				
<b>Thursday, May 16</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Classroom 1</b>	<b>Classroom 2</b>	<b>Ballroom</b>	<b>Vendor Room</b>	<b>Registration Desk</b>
7:30-8:30	Hospitality Room Open				
9:00-10:30	No Class	No Class	Paradability Competition	Dealers Open	Registration Open
10:30-11:00	No Class	No Class	Group Photo		
11:00-12:00	No Class	No Class	Balloon Challenge		
11:30-1:00	Lunch On Your Own				
1:00-2:00	No Class	No Class	Headliner: Pop-Up Q&A Let's Create and Shine Chagy	Dealers Closed	Registration Closed
2:00-2:15	Break				

2:15-3:15	<b>Dos and Don'ts of Foam</b> Bill LeBlanc	<b>Introduction to Improv for Clowns</b> Kevin Scharf				
3:15-3:30	Break					
3:30-4:30	<b>Building a Santa Experience</b> Myke Hutchings and David Milmine	<b>It's Show BUSINESS, Baby!</b> Adam Schill			Dealers Closed	Registration Closed
5:00-7:00	Break - Get Ready for Theme Party					
7:00-10:00	Theme Party (Hors D'oeuvres and cash bar)					
10:00-?	Hospitality Room & Jam Rooms Open					
<b>Friday, May 17th</b>						
Time	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Ballroom	Vendor Room	Registration Desk	
7:30-8:30	Hospitality Room Open					
9:00-12:00	No Classes	No Classes	Single Skit Competition		Registration Open	
12:00-1:00	Lunch On Your Own				Dealers Open Last Chance!	
1:00-2:00	<b>Balloon Wearables</b> Kynisha Ducre	<b>Designing a Show That Flows</b> Matty Spraggins				
2:15-2:30	Break					
2:30-4:30	Auction					
4:30-6:00	Break - Get Ready for Banquet					
6:00-7:00	Pre-Banquet Social Hour - Cash Bar - First drink on us!					
7:00-10:00	2024 COAI Convention Awards Banquet					

# JUNIOR JOEYS

By Regina “Cha Cha” Wollrabe,  
Junior Joeys Director



What did the scarf say to the hat? *I'll hang around while you go on ahead.*

Why did the hat sit on the bed? *It wanted to capture its dreams.*

Do you want to get ahead and capture your dreams as a funny entertainer? Then learn hat tricks! Start one of these easy things you can do with a hat. First, find a hat to complement your character's costume. I highly

recommend investing in a hat that can do tricks—one with even weight around the rim.

I'd like to introduce to you Bri Crabtree. I met her years ago at the Portland Juggling Festival and took a class from her on how to do hat tricks. She is a children's entertainer and has so many fun things for you that I can hardly wait for you to learn about her.

Her website is [www.BriCrabtree.com](http://www.BriCrabtree.com) She has affordable hats for sale for our young beginners. If you buy one from her, she will send you a guide to six easy hat tricks.

Bri has videos on her YouTube station (Britree99) called “Easy Funny Hat Tricks” and “How to Kick a Hat onto Your Head” that will help you with some of our hat criteria. You can also find her on TikTok @SillyCircusShow and Instagram @Bri\_Crabtree. Yes, grownups, you will learn from her, too! In addition to teaching hat tricks, Bri shares what she knows about entertaining children.

The Beginner Hat Tricks pin is here and I'm so excited to have gotten input on this one from Bri Crabtree. Bri looked at the criteria with me and agreed that these memory triggers will work. When you use them, you will be able to remember the idea and master the tricks. She hopes that you will enjoy hat juggling as much as she does. Thank you, Bri!

Other artists who would be great to search on YouTube include Bill Irwin (“Clowning and Hat Tricks Challenge”). He is an amazing physical comedian and clown. Also look for Andy Head, who is an award-winning juggler. Andy uses isolation and movement to create the illusion of his hat having a personality of its own. His movements look robotic and mime-like at times. Neils Duinker from the Netherlands also has hat juggling tutorials which can be found on YouTube Kids.

If you like going back in time you might want to check out “How Buster Keaton Created Comedy with His Hat” and “George Carl's Hat Tricks: The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour.”

Okay, Junior Joeys and Joeys of all ages, let me know if you enjoyed trying these ideas on the Beginning Hat Tricks Pin Criteria. You can reach me by email at [CoaiJrJoeys@gmail.com](mailto:CoaiJrJoeys@gmail.com). Bump a nose!





# BEGINNING HAT TRICKS

Hat tricks are a great skill to develop for any character. With your hat on your head, you are ready to play. A hat is like a partner—a clown's best friend. You can play with your hat and even show emotions with it. Hat tricks can be added to your walk-around routines and used in your shows. Have fun trying these hat tricks, and keep learning more! Show your audience that you are serious about entertaining.

- As you place the hat on your head, flick it up in the air and act surprised that it left your head.
- Push the hat off your head and let it roll down your arm.
- Roll the hat across your arms and chest to the other hand.
- Wipe your hat off with your arm as if you are saying, "Whew!"
- Drop the hat, and when you go to grab it, kick it away.
- With your hat on your foot, kick it up to your head.
- Let the hat roll down your back and catch it with your hand.
- Pretend the hat is another object and mime what it is.
- Collapse the hat and pretend to blow it up like a balloon.
- Put the hat on a cane, broom, or your elbow and pretend you can't find it.
- Parent/Jr. Joey Leader Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Three Easy Ways to Get the Attention of Kids (and Keep It)

By Bri Crabtree

Engaging a group of kids takes much more than a funny act. You need to get their attention and keep it—not an easy task with a bunch of squirmy preschoolers! Here are my top three tips for making sure everyone hears your jokes.

1. Add amplified sound to your show. It doesn't have to be fancy or expensive. It can be a simple voice amplifier, and they run about forty dollars on Amazon. I use a voice amplifier at birthday parties, small indoor preschool shows, and even for strolling entertainment. There's an old street performer's saying that goes, "If they can't hear you, they hate you!" That's a bit harsh, but if nobody can hear you, then nobody cares!
2. Come armed with call-and-response attention-grabbers. Here in California, you can hum a tune and the kids will respond. For instance, we use the tune, "Shave and a haircut, two bits," replacing the words with "duh, nuh, nuh, nuh." The kids will shout out "duh duh" or clap their hands twice to the beat. Kids love interactive things, and this is a way to grab their attention and have them actively participate.
3. Be ready to use psychology to your advantage. Kids love compliments, rewards, and structure. First, get everyone organized and settled. Say, "We are going to start the show, but first I need to see everyone sitting crisscross apple sauce." Then, single out kids who are doing it and compliment them about how well they listen. Say, "Sophia is a good listener!" Then add in another element. Say, "In order to start the show, I need everyone touching their nose!" Promise rewards for those who listen, then keep adding silly things to do. This way, it's more like a game and it will grab the interest of the kids. Eventually the entire group will be on the same page, and you can start the show!

Kids learn these types of interactions in school, so use this to your advantage. You don't need to reinvent the wheel, just make it fun! These simple tips can instantly make your birthday party show better.



## About the Author

Bri Crabtree is based in Oakland, California, and has more than twenty years of experience in children's entertainment. She performs magic, unicycling, juggling, and her special brand of silliness produces nonstop giggles. Bri loves to share tips and tricks that she has learned on her journey to make yours easier. Visit her online at [www.bricrabtree.com](http://www.bricrabtree.com) or reach her by email at [britree@gmail.com](mailto:britree@gmail.com).



# Sixty Years as Bobby the Clown

By Bobby Semon

Looking back on sixty years as Bobby the Clown, I am grateful to everyone who has kept me young and smiling for so long. My clowning began in Chicago, where I grew up idolizing Bozo the Clown, Emmett Kelly, and Lou Jacobs. At age thirteen, I had my first paying job as a clown at a picnic. I dressed as a tramp who was also a mime and had a big horn like Harpo! I made fifteen dollars for a three-hour show.

I performed at a few parties and picnics throughout the following years. Then, in 1970, I joined the Navy. That didn't stop me from clowning!

Serving on the *U.S.S. Guadalcanal* and later the *U.S.S. America*, I was afforded the opportunity to entertain thousands of sailors as well as children in port cities. The Navy arranged for Bobby the Clown to visit orphanages, hospitals, and schools in Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Greece, the U.K., Kenya, and others.

When I retired in 1990, my wife convinced me to try full-time clowning. Well, thirty years later, I am still clowning along with working as Santa.

When the Tides, Baltimore's farm-league baseball team, opened a new stadium in 1993, I was there to entertain along with balloon and face painting artists. I went on to work with the company that had the contract for balloons and face painting until I bought that company in 1999. Today, I continue supplying the team with face painting and balloon artists. I am thankful to them and to the many others who give me the opportunity to bring joy and happiness into their lives—and to make me feel old!

People often come up to me and say that I did their child's birthday party when they were five and the child is now in their thirties. I look different today, but they still



*On the USS America with the photo officer while out on deployment.*

remembered the fun they had with me years ago.

One thing I have always thought about my clowning is that I do this for the kids (of all ages). I hope to continue bringing joy and happiness into people's lives for many more years.



*Bobby the Clown in Philadelphia at the zoo with the USO.*

# PIRATE PARTY IMPROV

By Regina “Cha Cha” Hernandez

A client called me to schedule a pirate-themed birthday party for a six-year-old boy, who would have thirty classmates attending his party.

I could already tell that this was not my typical party, because I was being scheduled through the venue rather than the mom. The contact from the venue told me that they wanted me to stay for two and a half hours and do a walk-around and balloons. Living as a caregiver for my dad with all my clown props and costumes in disarray, my mind started to scramble. But I took the gig and told myself that I would pull it together and figure it out.

With only a week to go and very little time to plan, I worked on the show in my mind. My performer friends helped me talk out some ideas and I made a list of items I wanted to find. In one day, I pulled everything together. My gut told me to not only come up with a show, but to also bring a miniature suitcase filled with little props that would prompt walkaround skits and bits.

I charged my Bluetooth speaker and prepared my sponge balls to regain their shape. I put my costume, wig, and makeup box in my bathroom, and packed my show case, games, and balloons in my car the night before.

On the day of the performance, everything went according to clockwork. Feeling I had no time, I forced myself to make a tuna sandwich and eat it so that I had something in my stomach. I put the magnets on my car and looked up pirate jokes, taking



A few items in my suitcase—the fish trick worked perfectly for a pirate theme.



Cha Cha the Clown.

screenshots so I could easily pull them up in my photo roll whenever I needed them.

I had no script and heavily relied on my improvisational skills. Typically, I start shows in a very set way, but every now and then when it's a large party and kids are scattered, I blow my whistle and start by playing a game to gather the kids. I introduced myself as Cha Cha, told them how excited I was to be at the child's birthday party, and said that as pirates we were going to balance our swords.

I'd like to share some of the ideas that I came up with for this pirate-themed party, which made my show feel more planned.

Before I left home, I took eight minutes to prepare thirty-eight balloon swords to hand out to each child as they arrived.

Upon my arrival at the party and before I gathered the children, I put my phone on a tripod, searched for pirate music, and connected it to my Bluetooth speaker.

I laid out my parachute and had the kids, all of whom already had swords, stand around it in a big circle. We did introductions and immediately started playing Simon Says, but I did my own



Left: The birthday boy before his party guests arrive. Quick snack while preparing sponge balls. Above: Set up makeup and costume the night before.

version called Cha Cha Says. We balanced the swords like good pirates do. On one finger, on our elbow, on our knee. Can we balance it on our shoe? No? Okay, let's balance it on our nose. Cha Cha says put your sword up high, put it down low, wiggle the sword. "You are the best listening pirates on the sea," I told them.

Next, I told them to gently place their swords on the ground behind them and grab the parachute. I said parachute down low, parachute up high, then repeated myself a second time. This is how I get them used to listening to me. After we put it up high, I told them we were going to snap the parachute. I put two soft, furry balls on it. As we brought the parachute low and then high before snapping it, the kids got a kick out of the

balls shooting straight to the ceiling—almost like a cannon on a pirate ship.

I blew my whistle and said, "Parachute on the ground!" then dumped twenty plastic balls on the parachute. I explained how a storm is coming and we are going to shake the parachute and watch all the balls get tossed around. I then loudly and excitedly announced, "The storm is here!" I shook the parachute, causing balls to fly everywhere. Kids are laughing with delight. As soon as I see only one ball is left and about to fly off, I blow my whistle and say, "Parachute down, get the balls! Quick, quick! Another storm is coming on the sea!" As soon as I see them ready again, I yell out, "The storm is here!" The kids knew what to do and shook the parachute. We did this about five times. Then I asked all the little pirates to help me collect the balls and sit on the ocean.

I could see this wasn't really working and I wanted to pull out the parachute from underneath the kids in a fun way, so I pulled out my slide whistle and said, "When you hear the whistle go high like this, stand up. When you hear it go low, sit down." They stood up and I told them to stand outside of the parachute, then whistled at them to sit down

before making them stand up again so I could take the parachute. I asked them to sit down, then stand up, and told all of them to stand here and look toward me. We did this until they were sitting in a clump, like a little audience with no big gaps in the crowd. I did this to create better photo opportunities and help the children sit in the right direction so they could enjoy the show.

I moved on to my birthday tricks, adding two tricks that were not usually in my show but fit the pirate theme: a fishing trick I hardly ever used, and a snake cake routine. Both were ideas from Sammy Smith's collection, but because I couldn't remember how he does them, I again had to rely on improvisation.

I did prepare the snake cake at home before the party. I practiced reloading the cake pan from a snake to a cake. It was harder to do it fast, so for the first time, I brought two cake pans—one in my suitcase that I'd loaded with a snake, and the second one in the big drop-off bag. When I got rid of the snake pan, I grabbed the dove pan loaded with the sponge cake. I also practiced the fishing trick a few times to see if I could get the gimmick to work for me the night before.



Load car and put on magnets the day before.



*Making a fun space for the show. Party decorations help spark improv ideas.*

Once I saw that I could successfully do it three times, I put it in my showcase.

Early in the show when I was introducing myself and before the parachute game, I told the kids, “I’m so glad you are all such good pirates, but there’s one thing pirates like that I do not like, and that’s snakes. I hope none of you mention the word ‘snake.’ I am so afraid of snakes!”

After the parachute, I did my birthday age sponge ball test, my magic birthday party coloring page, and my rabbit puppet that did a silly trick, with the magic words being “Happy Birthday Jordan.” I told the kids what good listening pirates they were. “Would you like some pirate food?” I asked them. “I have about a hundred jelly beans and plenty to go around.” I opened the can and snakes came flying out. “Oh no! Someone was thinking snakes. I told you I’m afraid of snakes! Don’t worry, I’ll get them out of here!” The snakes flew out of the can a couple of times to the sounds of hoots and hollers, which I totally love. We got rid of the snakes and then did the fishing trick.

Totally improvising, I did the part where the fish is on the outside and

needs to jump to the other side. When I pulled the fish down and it got in the middle, they were wowed. “How did you do that?” the kids asked me. “I’m not sure, but let’s make the fish jump to the outside again,” I told them. Then I dropped down the other two fish. “Well, look at that. You are good at fishing and now there are plenty to go around!” They were so surprised.

After dropping the fish in the drop bag, I told them it was time to make the cake and we needed a magic wand. I did a few of the silly wand bits and said, “Please don’t think about snakes.” I got the lid and put it on the pan while the kids waved their fingers or magic wands. Then I said, “It’s time to make a cake, we are not thinking snake. Here we go, we’ll lift the lid and ...” I shrieked. “Ahhh, it’s a snake!” One little boy told me, “I was thinking snake!” I totally freak out and go into silly mode, and said, “I’m so afraid of snakes, I’m going to get rid of them. You scary snakes ate all my pirate food!” I dropped them in the bag, lifted up the other pan, and did the trick again, making a sponge cake but assuring them that the real cake was “right this way, follow me.” The kids followed me to the real

cake where we got a group photo with the swords, then sang the birthday song.

It was time to serve the cake. I blew my whistle and took the kids to play a couple of musical games. We did the limbo and the cha cha slide.

Soon, the children were able to sit down and eat. I packed up my show and moved to another room that had games. I found pirate music and made balloons for the rest of the party (thirty kids takes a while). Everyone was happy and I was told by the venue and a few parents that they were amazed how I managed to entertain and hold the attention of thirty kindergartners. I was thankful for improv, which helped me pull off-the-cuff ideas from my head. At the very end of the party, the birthday boy asked me for a pirate ship, and I improvised again. We did it together after most of his friends had gone home and his mom and dad were still taking care of business with the venue. It didn’t look like a fancy, professionally made pirate ship, but he loved it. It was so fun to see his complete delight over the balloon creation we made together from his ideas.

# 25 Years go

By Lauren Jurgensen

The September/October 1998 issue of *The New Calliope* kicked off the issue with a twist in the form of a poem from COAI member Ray “Wembley” Lockhart. Here’s an excerpt:

*I don't do it for the money,  
Thought I've heard it can be done.  
I do it for the others,  
And to spread a little fun.  
  
I do it for the children,  
And for the grownups too.  
I do it for the older kids  
Who think they're just “too cool.”*

Find out how the poem ends by visiting the vault at [www.mycoai.com](http://www.mycoai.com). There, you’ll discover the complete collection of past issues—so grab a few to give yourself something to read on a rainy day or cozy winter night. The vault is an immense and reliable resource for clowning ideas, inspiration, and history.

Speaking of clowning ideas and inspiration, you can find Bruce “Charlie” Johnson’s tips for sparking creativity on page 12 of the September/October 1998 issue. “Creativity is like physical strength. It increases with exercise,” he wrote. “Creativity in one area leads to increased creativity in all areas. The creativity I’ve developed as a clown has often led to creative solutions to problems in my personal life. People who work to develop original routines tend to also be better at improvisation.”

On page 14, Darlene “Snowflake” Adams shared her best advice for magician’s assistants and team entertainers. Or, as she put it, for “top banana” and “second banana” duos. “If you’ve determined that you’re better suited to the support position [second banana], then enjoy it! Not being in the spotlight every second doesn’t reflect on your clowning abilities, it’s just the definition of TEAM,” wrote Darlene. “Your part can be more fun, and is just as vital to the professional atmosphere of the show.”

Check out the “\$16.50, 7-hour Walkaround” on page 16, courtesy David “Mr. Rainbow” Bartlett. Although twenty-five years of inflation may have since doubled the price to create these props, it’s still a savvy and value-based approach to how you can get the most bang for your buck when designing props for an all-day walkaround routine.

Mike “Buster” Bednarek’s column on page 22 explained his “whack” approach to overcoming mental locks when dreaming up a new routine. A “whack” is a term that Roger von Oech coined to describe a method you can use to shake up your creative thinking. Here’s a preview of some of Mike’s tips: Eliminate attitudes like “That idea isn’t logical,” “Follow the rules,” or “I’m not creative.” Also, look for more than one answer. Stopping at just one answer limits your creativity while putting too much pressure on you to find the one “right” answer. According to von Oech, “Nothing is more dangerous than an idea when it’s the only one you have.”

What if you’re hired to clown at a party for adults (“big kids”)? Karen “Peppermint” Reinholt can tell you how to do it on page 24. “I like to get a clear picture [from the potential client] of what the party is all about. It is important to ask these questions

## INSPIRATION AND HUMOR



before deciding what will work and what can happen,” she wrote. Will it be all adults or a family-style party with kids? If there are kids, it’s possible they just want you to entertain the kids only—in which case you can handle it like a normal kid-show. If the party will be run more like a company-style picnic, it may be best to start with face painting and balloons before ending with a comedy magic show. By then, “The adults will be reconnecting with their children and are more likely to stay and watch the show after they’ve had a chance to socialize.” If it’s truly an adult birthday party, you can offer to roast the birthday guest of honor. Ask the host up front for as much information as you can about the birthday person—hobbies, habits, funny stories, likes and dislikes, what they do for a living, etc. “I ask that they only give me information that won’t embarrass or make anyone uncomfortable,” wrote Karen.

On page 28, Margaret “Maggie the Magical Clown” shared how full-time clowns can increase their weekday business by offering to deliver funny and celebratory telegrams. Lee “Juggles” Mullally wrote an introduction to developing walkarounds on page 32. There’s also Jennifer “Joyful” Sosinski’s “ABC’s For Caring Clowns” column on page 27 and Cheri “Cherri-Oats” Venturi’s tips for washing your wig on page 39.

And that’s just the content you can find in a single back issue from the COAI Vault. So check it out—and bump a nose!

TNC

# 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 eight more things that children enjoy at my comedy magic shows, and hopefully in yours—magic, clowning, or otherwise.

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 preschools, picnics, and other kid-related or family functions.

Study this list to see how it applies to you and your performance. Without further ado, here are my final eight tips for entertaining children, in no particular order.

**26. Magic Wands.** Thanks to Harry Potter and Cinderella's Fairy Godmother song "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo," children love the concept of a magic wand. All we have to do is wave that wand and magic happens, trouble vanishes, things get fixed, and things we don't have (but do want) appear out of thin air like ... *magic!* So, if you and I are playing the "magic game" in our shows, we need magic wands. But do they have to work? Of course not!

Wilting Flower, Growsome Wand, Stretching Wand, Popaway Wand, Color-Changing Wand, Comedy Flower Wand, Long John Wand, Jumbo Surprise Wand Filled with Spring Snakes—these are just a few of the comedy magic wands I have used in my thirty-two years of live shows. Most of the time I use wands as accessories to tie together parts of routines. In other words, the wand itself is not the main magic trick. It's just a filler, an embellisher. And keep this in mind: whenever possible, put magic wands in the hands of your audience helpers. That makes them feel good and useful, plus it often creates more laughs.



**27. Danger Tricks for Comedy.** Okay, let me explain first that I *do not* use danger tricks such as choppers in my shows for kindergartens and preschool audiences. I have made it a point throughout my career to only use these in family shows and in schools where the older students are present. I feel that their laughter acts as a buffer for the little kids present. Here are seven points I wish to make about so-called "danger tricks," so you'll understand how and why I use them:

(1) I always have a *reason* for doing a chopper, not just to "chop off your head." It's a new invention that won't cut you. (2) The trick is always under *my control* and never truly dangerous. (3) Yet, the audience must *think* it's dangerous, or what's the point? (4) Danger tricks, for me, are always "comedy vehicles." (5) This type of trick is something that I perform *later in the show*, at least thirty minutes into my forty-five-minute show. By this time, the kids are accustomed to me and my sense of humor and, frankly, they trust me. (6) I always use an older student, somewhere between ages ten to twelve, and never a five-year-old. (7) Most importantly, the kid helper becomes a *hero*.

Over the years, I have used head choppers, guillotines, Disecto, sword boxes, dagger head chests, Arrowheads, Sword Through Neck, and other such tricks. Another one of my favorite danger tricks of is Gene Gordon's version of the Sword Through Neck, published both in his *Magical Legacy* book and my *School Show Presentation*, where you can also "hear" me doing it on the accompanying audio tape.

However, my newest favorite over the last ten years is what I call the Spike Arm Illusion, which is my version of the old Spikes Supreme trick made in England many years ago. Over a ten-year period, I have developed three routines for this – one a “watch tester” and the other two “tests of manhood.” These allow me to employ two audience kids who are about ten to thirteen years old. Then, using lots of corny lines and gags, I spend six minutes of fun sticking wooden spikes through the girl or boy’s arm. The kid is never in danger, because a partition stands between the spikes and his or her arm. Since Supreme went bankrupt ten years ago, I have chosen to have a retired magician/school teacher who loves woodwork make this trick exclusively for me. If you haven’t seen me perform it, check out my *Magic of Hawaii* or *Live Kidbiz 4: Storytelling with Magic* videos. Or, better yet, watch me perform it live during a show or lecture. Just knowing that I will be performing Spike Arm when I wake up that morning makes my whole day enjoyable! It’s that much fun.

**28. Use Toys.** Children love toys because they love to play, and toys give them a vehicle for play. Toys also help them learn. Some of us learned from playing with Lincoln Logs, Erector Sets, Tinker Toys, model train sets, or Legos. During the 2002 Christmas season, my family watched a television movie called *The Man Who Saved Christmas*. It tells the story of A. C.



Gilbert, the man who made the Erector Set and many other creative toys for children between the 1910s through the late 1960s. Children loved playing with his metal building toys, and I was one of them. I had fun building with Erector Set parts, and I learned a lot at the same time. Hmm, what a concept – to *have fun* while you are *learning*! I bet that means you’d learn twice as much and twice as well because you are having fun! Two years ago, I created a special preschool act called the *Magic Toy Show*. Every trick in the show was either a toy or something to do with a toy. It was fun to create and present to three, four, and five-year-olds. As suspected, they loved it from the moment I told them the name of the show. Want to create fun for children? Put one or more toys in your show and do magic with them! Or simply tell the kids that this magic trick *is* a toy. Instant attention!

**29. Kids Love Candy.** Right or wrong, children love candy. Doing tricks and routines with anything sweet attracts their attention. Often, tricks with brand-name candies make an even stronger

impression because of familiarity. One of the oldest candy tricks around is the simple Lollipop Trick. This is a gimmicked lollipop made out of wood, originally created in the 1930s or ’40s, and looks like a Tinker Toy stick with a wheel on each end. Each side of this lollipop is painted a different color, four in all: purple, green, yellow, and orange. By having the lollipop gimmick in a paper bag, you can remove it with one end hidden in your hand, show green, return it to the bag, turn it around, and then show yellow. Lime, then lemon, as if you have two different lollipops. Then, inside the bag, you reverse ends and repeat the action to show orange and grape (purple). Remove the purple, say you’ll keep it, and place it in your pocket. Then you can tear up the bag and “vanish” the other three lollipops. Sammy Smith has marketed two candy effects: Jim Swoger’s Really Quick Candy Trick, in which a roll of Lifesavers instantly changes to a stick of gum at your fingertips, and David Garrard’s Pop Pop Poof, in which two Tootsie Roll Pops of different colors change places in the hands of two children. I personally used Pop Pop Poof in over fifty pre-school shows one year, and it played great. Why? Because kids love candy!

**30. Use Puppets.** Okay, David, we gotta stop there. I hear you saying it: “I ain’t no puppet boy or girl!” Hey, I didn’t think so either. But eight years ago, I put a cute Australian koala puppet in my *Magic Down Under* show, and the kids thought he was real! I’m no ventriloquist,



## INSPIRATION AND HUMOR

so I simply let the puppet “talk” into my ear, and I tell the kids what he says. That means he can be funny, *and* he can be educational. Children will listen to him tell them things that maybe they wouldn’t listen to if the teacher, counselor, or principal said the same things. In the years that followed, I employed the same kind of routine with a rabbit out of the hat, an Alaskan grizzly bear, a frog, a bookworm, even a snake in a basket. There is a wonderful little dog puppet routine in Gene Gordon’s *Magical Legacy*, if you can find a copy of this out-of-print volume. I adapted a little of that routine, too.

My number one hint: Children, especially young children under the age of seven, think that puppets are real.

Remember this! Don’t finish your routine and toss the puppet into a suitcase. And for crying out loud, don’t do the Rocky Raccoon counting routine by banging the puppet’s head on the table. That may be funny to adults, but it’s a disaster in a children’s show because little kids think *you* have hurt the raccoon. Doing such a thing will harm your show and your bookings. After one Alaska show, in which my little bear said a first-grade girl was “his girlfriend” and he “met her at the Dairy Queen and she was eating a hot fudge sundae,” that same six-year-old came up to the stage and wanted to speak to me. The principal was standing nearby, so I sat down on the front of the low stage and had the little girl do the

same. “What did you want to ask me?” I said to her. Shyly, she said, “Why did that little bear say those things about me?” I started to say, honey, that bear didn’t *say* anything, it was *me* talking! Then it hit me hard – she thinks the bear is real. To her, he is alive. So, I thought quickly and said: “I think he said that because *he likes you* and he thinks you’re one of the nicest girls in the whole school.” “Oh,” she said. “Okay.” She smiled and went back to join her class as they were leaving. Why did that little bear say those things about me? Treat your puppets gently in front of the children. They still believe.

The Home of Kidshow Magic  
**GinnMagicShop.com**

**Free Books**  
**Free Reads**



**200 Free**  
**Videos**

**All New Website!**



**SPSmagic.com**  
Big Laughs for Little People

DISCOVER MORE THAN  
**100 PROPS, BOOKS,  
AND AUDIO-VIDEO  
PROGRAMS**  
FOR  
**KID-SHOW  
AND FAMILY  
ENTERTAINERS!**

spsmagic.com

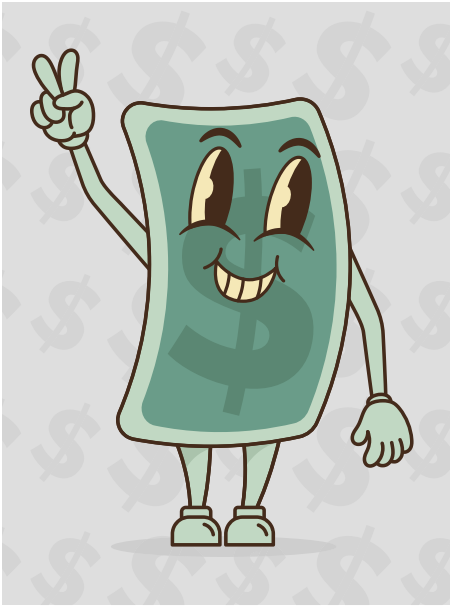


**MOOSEBURGER CAMP 2024**  
**August 5th thru 11th 2024**  
with special guest Randy Christensen

- Polish your performances for skits.
- Laugh & learn with clowns like you!
- Build props for parades and walk-arounds.
- Sign up now and make month payments.

**MOOSEBURGER.COM (320) 963 6277**





**31. Money Is Magnetic.** Years ago at a convention, magician George Kirkendall told me, “When I’m working hospitality rooms, I always start out with coins. I shake them and jingle them because they attract attention. People are attracted to the sound of money.” To some extent, children are the same. One year I did an entire school show about money. I called it the *All About Money Magic Show*, and I taught children the history of money and different types of money. I even auctioned off the principal’s one dollar bill, till it was only worth a penny. That penny I enlarged magically until it was four inches in diameter. But I traded it in for a dinner roll, and inside that roll we discovered the principal’s dollar bill! I will publish that routine in a future book. Children enjoyed the “money” show, and besides the magic, I believe the idea of money was the attraction. Two of my favorite money-related routines are on the *Kidshow How-2* video, performed and taught: (1) The Giant Money routine with seven kids on stage and a hundred dollar bill silk, and (2) The Credit Card in Coke Bottle using the principal’s own charge card. Kids freaked out the year I did that because *their* own principal’s Visa or Mastercard vanished and appeared to be sealed inside of a two-liter plastic bottle of Coca-Cola. Also note that the trick played stronger because

the credit card belonged to someone the children knew, especially someone of authority and importance in their lives. Probably my favorite money trick for kidshows is the Miser’s Dream. You can see me perform this for five hundred school students live on my *Magic They Love to See* teaching video. I use a combination of music, sleight-of-hand coin stuff, and the Abbott’s Coin Pail, which is a mechanical device that delivers dozens of coins into my hands as needed. This routine is so strong for me that I purposely recycle it in school shows about every third or fourth year. I am presently using it in *Tales of the Mighty Mississippi*, pretending to collect admission money for a ride on an 1850s Mississippi River showboat. I always end up with a girl on stage holding the bucket (coin pail), and a shower of coins falls into the bucket from her nose! The audience kids go absolutely nuts with laughter and surprise over this, and it usually rolls into applause. To see a small show version of this, take a look at *Another Bag of Magic*, my video of a church preschool show. In this version, I perform the coin pail without music, moving around and through the audience, talking to the children as I go. Fun and different.

**32. Play with Them.** In case you’ve never read any in-depth stuff about humans, the truth is we all have five basic needs: food, clothing, shelter, love, and recreation. Yes, you heard right. One of our basic needs is recreation, also known as “play,” and children know that intrinsically. Unfortunately, adults set aside play as they grow older, and often bury their need to play. Most of us kidshow magicians and clowns still understand it. And in the purest sense, what I do during my forty-five minutes on stage at a school, party, or library is play with my audience. I tell them stories, create laughter, lead them down paths with incongruent turns and twists, and offer them surprises filled with what Doug Henning used to call “a sense of wonder.”

It is all organized “play,” and I have fun doing it while I am creating this fun play.

**33. Create Fun.** Whether the purpose of your show is to entertain children, educate children, even sell them on something, you can’t have a successful show for children without creating fun in your performance. How can you do that? My first answer is to enjoy yourself during the show. Yes, I am saying that you should have fun yourself, inside yourself. Only then can you really create fun for the children in your audiences. Then, take these things I have shared with you (plus your personality, your life stories and experiences, your taste in music and ice cream and candy, and your sense of humor) and *make fun for them* through what you do. Coincidentally, while finishing up this book, I am reading Glen David Gold’s magic novel *Carter Beats the Devil*. On page 237 of the hardbound first edition, Carter’s brother James poses the question:

“You know why people like your act?” “Yes.” Then Carter muttered, “All right, why?” “Because it’s fun. You give the audience hours of fun, and when they think about it later, they have fun all over again.” “I like that,” he said, as though asking James whether he should in fact like it. “So you should have fun too.”

Now, whether Glen David Gold made up this conversation or whether Charles Carter and his brother actually had this conversation in the 1920s is not the point. Either way, it bears out what I’ve already said to you, and what I learned through thirty-two years of trial and error and fun myself. My honest, earnest wish is that you also will leave your audiences with fun that they remember ... because of you. **TNC**

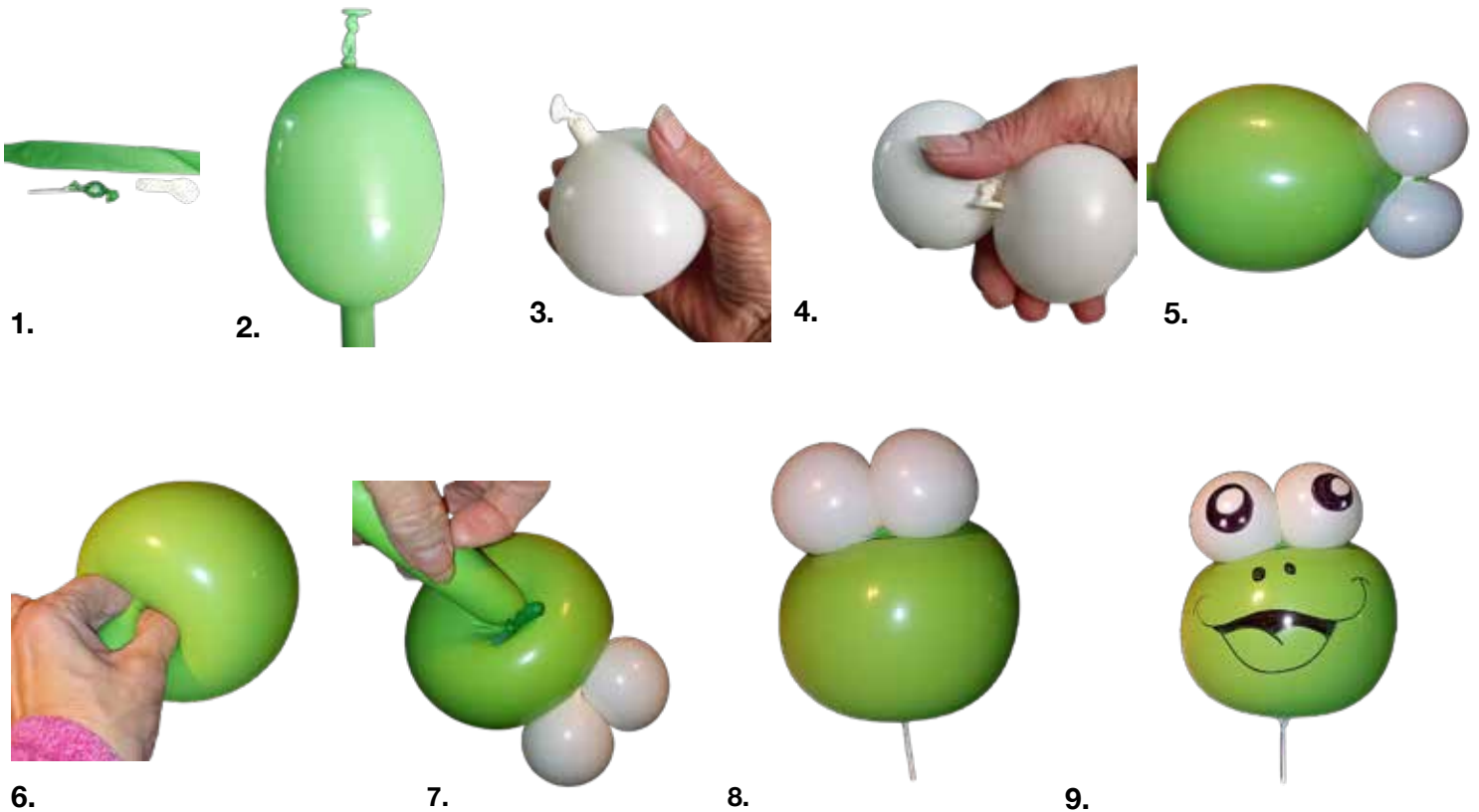
For more kidshow fun, check out David Ginn’s new book, *Kids Love Animals*, available directly from him at [ginnmagicshop.com](http://ginnmagicshop.com).

Artwork credits: ISTOCK



# Frog Lollipop

By Merrily Johnston



1. You'll need one green six sixty, one white five inch round, and one small lollipop
2. Inflate 660 to five fingers. Push the air back a few inches toward the uninflated part of the balloon and tie a knot leaving three fingers between the nozzle and the knot. Tie a second knot close to the nozzle.
3. Inflate the 5-inch round to three fingers. Tie knot close to inflated

4. Squeeze the 5-inch round in half and twist, forming the eyes. Wrap eyes into the knot closest to the inflated part of the balloon.
5. Take the white nozzle and the green nozzle and push together through the inflated part of the green balloon, grabbing

the nozzles on the other side. Twist several times. Take a scrap of balloon and wrap it several times between the knot and the inflated part of the balloon, tying a double knot to hold in place. Trim excess.

- 6-8. Push knot up toward eyes and insert lollipop.
9. Add artwork.

# NO PEEKING!

By Ann “Tuttles” Sanders

In this two-clown trick, the performers communicate “telepathically” to identify which objects audience members select.

Start by having Clown 1 collect multiple items from the audience members and place them on a table.

Next, have Clown 2 use a bandana to cover their eyes or turn their back to the audience. Be certain to stress, no peeking allowed! You can have the audience keep watch to ensure Clown 2 cooperates.

If you are a pirate, rather than a bandana you can wear an eye patch or two!

Clown 1 selects an audience member and asks them to point to an object on the table.

Once the object is identified, Clown 2 uncovers their eyes or turns back around and faces the audience.



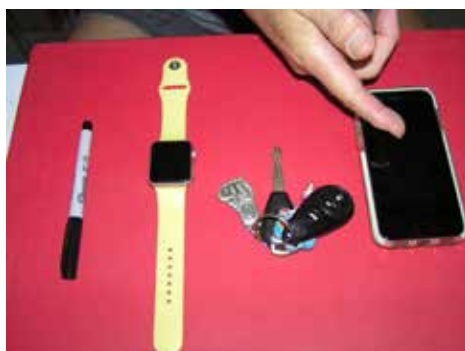
Clown 1 then points to the various objects one at a time, asking Clown #2 to concentrate and receive ‘telepathically’ the vibrations from the object the audience member selected. This is an excellent opportunity for showmanship!

Once all the objects have been pointed out, Clown 2 reveals their answer.

The secret to always being correct is Clown 2 watching Clown 1’s hand. Clown 1 uses their index finger, with a semi-closed fist, for all the items except the one selected by the audience member. They casually change the position of their fingers by uncurling them. To distract from the position of the hand being changed, one or both clowns can engage in conversation with the audience.

Don’t forget to return the objects to the audience members that donated them and, when the audience breaks into applause, don’t forget to take a bow!

Special thanks to Jim “Donuts” Donoughe for the Pirate Pete eye patch photo.



# THE WINTER QUARTERS

By Ron Severini

During the last three decades of the twentieth century, the winter quarters of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, Inc. was relocated to Venice, Florida, a small town on the southwest coast of Florida, approximately twenty miles south of Sarasota. Ringling had leased from the township of Venice a fairly sizeable piece of land, which actually included a small section of a tiny private airport. Once the circus took over the property, an airplane hangar was transformed into the official circus winter quarter arena. Included within this transformation on the back lot of the circus arena was a rehearsal lion cage, a practice circus ring, horse stables, an elephant barn, some workshops, and a few other miscellaneous buildings. Eventually, when the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown College was established, it was held inside the circus arena.

The Ringling Circus successfully resided on this site for thirty years; however, the lease for this property was coming to an end and the circus had to renegotiate to renew it. Unfortunately, some of the local city officials didn't really care about the circus residing in their sleepy little seaside town, and therefore did not want to continue the lease. This made negotiations difficult.

The circus management's position was that the circus brought a lot of notoriety and business income into the town of Venice. The city officials countered that position by saying they thought the circus really didn't add much income at all to the town, and actually, the circus took money out of the town by selling so many circus tickets and circus souvenirs.

I knew for a fact that when I had been the Director of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown College, I had spent well over six figures each and every year in Venice to run the Clown College program. In addition, the entire circus had

certainly spent a much greater amount. This included food for the crew, performers, and animals, as well as all the supplies and building materials needed to build each new show, to get it ready for each new season. I heard that this argument was presented to the Venice city officials but was met with deaf ears.

As a result, the circus had to do something noticeably grandiose—so unique and clever that it would be the “talk of the town,” and prove to these old-school officials just how financially beneficial it really was to have “The Greatest Show on Earth” as one of its key businesses and attractions in Venice.

None of the circus entertainers knew what was going to happen, but we all knew something brilliant was brewing. It didn't take long for the circus think-tank to work its “magic,” and when it happened, we all thought it was genius.

Let me explain.

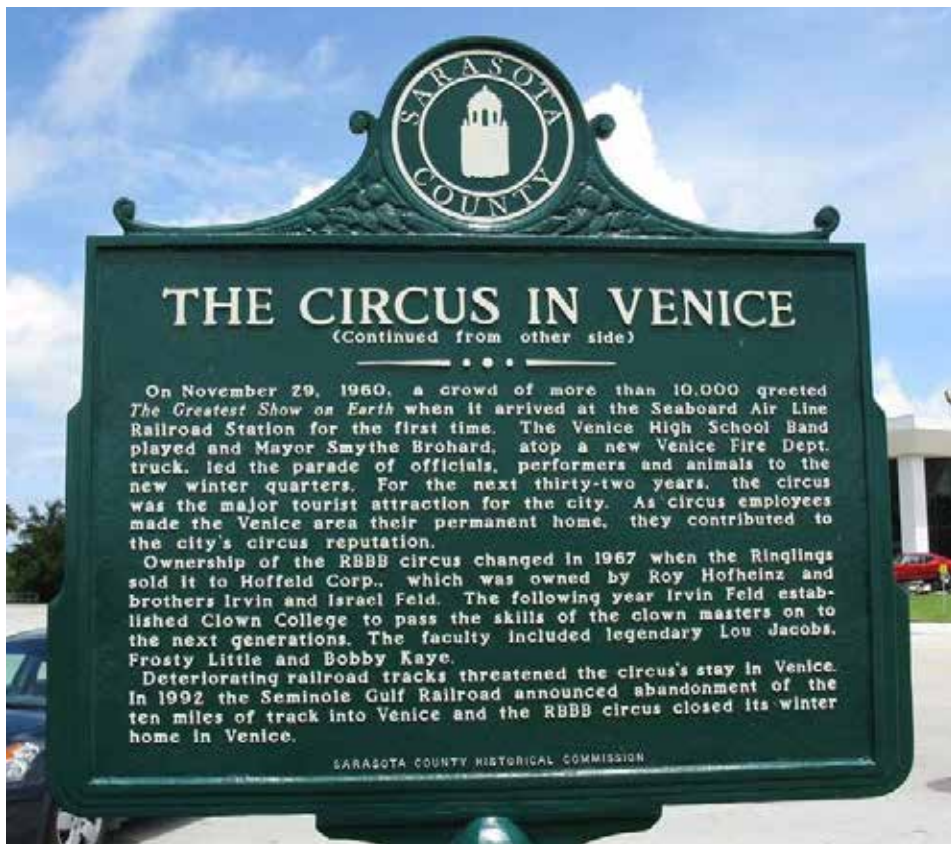
Fridays were payday. Every Friday, the paymaster would go around backstage and inform all of the department heads, “The eagle has landed,” “Go get your money,” and “It's payday!”

Well, this payday was different from all the preceding paydays. I personally went to the pay window and waited my



Venice, Florida, circus train yard.





turn. When I got to the front of the pay line and signed my pay slip, the paymaster slid over to me a thicker-than-usual pay envelope. Upon opening it, I found a stack of crisp new two-dollar bills, straight from the United States Treasury Department. My entire salary was paid in two-dollar bills. Everyone on the circus payroll was paid in two-dollar bills. Over that weekend and into our day off on Monday, every circus performer, rigger, and animal handler went out and spent their two-dollar bills.

It didn't take long for that sleepy little town of Venice, Florida, to be flooded with little green photos of Thomas Jefferson. No matter where you went, everyone in town was talking about it. You couldn't buy anything without getting change in two-dollar bills. It was safe to say that those old-school city officials got the point. The circus did, indeed, infuse this small, seaside retirement town with thousands upon thousands upon thousands of dollars!

Unfortunately, soon thereafter, the next circus dilemma we needed to deal with came upon us. The railroad train tracks that went all the way down the west coast of Florida were soon destined to be torn up and removed by the railroad company. This would prevent the circus train from traveling all the way down to Venice ever again. "The Greatest Show on Earth" had to find a new location during the winter months to park each of its forty-car circus trains.

All in all, it was okay back then. We were all used to moving. I will never forget the day when my pay envelope was stuffed with two-dollar bills. To commemorate it, I kept a few of those two-dollar bills as a memento.

*Ron Severini is the author of Ringling Remembered: Through the Eyes of a Circus Clown, from which this story is excerpted, with additional photos from Mr. Severini's collection. You can find his book on Amazon. For more stories, visit his blog at [www.theSeveriniCompany.com](http://www.theSeveriniCompany.com).*

## Welcome, NEW MEMBERS!

- Jillaine "Jolly Jill" Rabine**  
Canajoharie NY
- Inocencia "Happy Faces by Ino" Hernandez**  
Bronx NY
- Itzel "Happy Faces by Ino" Hernandez**  
Bronx NY
- Michele Ewa Medford** NY
- Michael "TELSTARR The IMPOSSIBLIST"**  
Telstarr Martel Toronto ON
- Gabriel "Gabs the Fool" Cole-Brant**  
Minneapolis MN
- Garrett "Filbert the Clown" Sherman**  
Lexington KY
- Barbara "Barbara Whiteman" Whiteman**  
Lake Forest CA
- Rob Adamson** Wheatley ON
- Glenn "G" Schroeder** Skokie IL
- Valerie Schroeder** Skokie IL
- Shaneda "Mz. Sass The Clown" Ford**  
Desoto TX
- Sterling "Ace" Beard** Richardson TX
- Ana "Alec" Rangel** San Antonio TX
- Luis "Estrellin" Lopez** Aguadilla PR
- Geraldine "Jeri" Benjamin** Bellingham MA
- Ivonne "Bonne the Clown" Ramirez**  
Mahwah NJ
- Stephen "Buzz" Dilsworth** Porter TX
- Liza "Lulu" Brant** Minneapolis MN
- Wanda "Jiggletwists" Knudsen**  
Richton Park IL
- Korene "Fortune Kookie" Tom**  
San Francisco CA
- William "Ali Kazoo" Norton** Lawton OK
- Francis Jeff Kennedy** Ashley PA
- Caden "Caden the Clown" Kerr** La Rue OH
- Jim "Jiminy" Fowler** Davis CA
- Violet "Vastra the Clown" Hammond**  
Rosalia WA
- Kali Chatterbox" Varn** Lavista NE
- José Valentin Fuentes Garcia** Yonkers NY
- Kenneth "Dun Duh Dun" Burton** Willits CA
- Tiffany "Silly Tilly" Dunlap** Willits CA

Membership Gifter - Alene Kraus

**REGISTER NOW**  
**FOR THE BIG ONE!**  
**POSITIVELY COMING TO**  
**BARABOO, WI**  
**SAVE BIG MONEY BY REGISTERING EARLY**

**THURS<sup>thru</sup> SUN**  
**JUNE**  
**6-7-8-9**

**JUST \$150.00 PER PERSON**  
**- BEFORE APRIL 14, 2024 -**  
**SEE REGISTRATION FORM IN THIS ISSUE**



**CIRCUS FANS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**  
**NATIONAL CONVENTION 2024**  
**& CENTRAL STATES CIRCUS SOIRÉE**

# THE LAST WALK-AROUND

## Bill “Dr. Pokonose” Pogue

Bill “Dr. Pokonose” Pogue, born November 17, 1932, in Wesley, Massachusetts, left an indelible mark on the clowning world throughout his life with his passion for entertaining and helping others.



Bill graduated from high school in Chevy Chase, Maryland. From there, he attended Williams College in Massachusetts and George Washington Medical School in Washington D.C., where he earned his Doctor of Medicine in 1959. Subsequently, he undertook a five-year radiology residency at University of California, Los Angeles, went to a hospital in Pasadena for nine months, and got married to his wife, Gwen

Pogue, before being drafted into the military at thirty-five, serving at the Balboa Naval Hospital for two years. Upon his return, he began his career at Grossmont Hospital in 1967.

Bill’s journey into the clowning world began when he enrolled in a clown course at Grossmont Hospital in 2002. Here, he discovered a love for clowning, drawn to the joy of performing and entertaining others. This passion led him to San Diego State University, where he took a course in clownology. After that, he attended Clown College in Minnesota for several years.

From being Santa Claus with a real beard for eight years at hospitals, churches, schools, Rotary, private non-profits, and functions for foster kids to participating in the San Diego All-Star Clown Club where he taught hospital clowning, rope tricks, and more, he cherished the connections and friendships he made in the clowning community. Notably, his involvement included hospital clowning with his fellow clowns Zorba, Grandma Huggs, and Wower from 2002 to 2019.

In addition to his love for clowning, Bill also loved traveling. He explored many different countries in Africa, Asia, and South America. His fascination with animals and sea life, particularly whales, led him to swim with humpback whales in the Caribbean, an experience he described as “mind-boggling.”

Bill’s philanthropic endeavors were incredibly significant. As a member of the Rotary since 1986, he actively contributed to projects that served the public, particularly international initiatives. Bill’s commitment extended to working with the youth under a group called Interact. He would take them around to work on

projects that helped others as well as give them the opportunity to experience different places and cultures. He also clowned at RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Activity Camp) for several years. Bill greatly enjoyed working with the youth.

Bill’s clowning attire as Dr. Pokonose included a six-inch ruby-colored nose that would light up when squeezed, a fake stethoscope, a stovepipe hat, and a doctor’s lab coat with red trim. He also included pins on his lab coat with several puns or jokes such as “stay in skool,” and “a cookie in each hand is a balanced diet.” Alongside his well-behaved ten-pound Maltese dog he would bring with him, he was also known to carry a sign that humorously read, “Beware of Dog!” on one side while the other side read, “The Dog is ok: Beware of people!”

Bill is survived by his wife, Gwen Pogue; his daughters Blair Pogue (Dwight Zcheile) and Kirsten Pogue-Cely (Luis Cely); and his grandchildren Diego Cely, Jade Cely, and Luke Zscheile. **TNC**

## RINGLING REMEMBERED “Through the Eyes of a Circus Clown” Ron Severini, Author



“ Ron Severini is a font of circus memories and experiences. His book paints an amazing picture of life spent with The Greatest Show on Earth. Perfect for any history or circus buff!

“ This is a GREAT BOOK!  
I highly recommend it  
to all. ”

—SCOTT O’DONNELL,  
Executive Director Circus World/Baraboo

—PRICILLA MOOSEBURGER,  
Director of Mooseburger  
Clown Arts Camp



Available in print and Kindle on  
**AMAZON.COM**  
TheSEVERINIcompany.com



TAKE PRIDE IN  
WHAT YOU DO

By Skip Way

*Be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all.* Young magician David Bamburg (Fu Manchu) showed his father, Theo Bamburg (Okito), a box he had just built. David was quite proud of the decorative prop, so his father's next words hit hard. "You did not paint the inside."

David countered, "But, no one sees the inside." Okito explained that this made the inside no less important. He clarified, "While no one else may know that your box is unfinished, you will."

The great Cesaro Pelaez of Le Grand David Magic Show took this story to heart. He created all of the costumes, props, and brilliantly detailed stage sets for his thirty-five-year run. He lined and detailed each of his costumes right down to the undergarments. Every prop was elaborately detailed and decorated inside and out, including the secret compartments that no one would ever see. Every piece was a museum-quality work of art.

Today, many hometown performers lack this pride in performance detail. How many of you simply pull new props out of their shipping boxes and put them directly into your shows, without the slightest concern for their general appearance? How many of your props display a hodgepodge assortment of Chinese dragons, clown faces, oddly colored blocks, and mylar stickers? I'll wager that a fair number of those reading this don't even display their name or logo on the front of their tables or backdrop.

Dad: "What did you do in school today, Johnnie?"

Johnnie: "Oh, we watched some clown do magic."

Our names and logos should stand out bold and proud on our tables and stage pieces. Every show piece should be exclusive to our show, decorated in our branded color scheme and theme with a quality that captures the eye. Climb out of your stodgy old comfort zone and be creative! Make every part of your show a work of art.

Begin with your signature piece—that one standout routine that no one else is doing. How can you make it better? What changes can you make to prop design, handling, costuming, and music that will make this one routine a masterpiece? Make it shine! Then, move on to the next until your entire show is the showpiece of your market! **TNC**

## Our Good Cheer List

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

**Ruth "Sweet Sue" Hoppe**  
Parkview Manor  
516 13th St., Room 111  
Wallman, IA 52366

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

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

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

**Good Cheer Chair:**

**Bonnie Corcia**  
*bonkygbird@gmail.com*  
732-718-5840

*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 kids show performer named Happy Dan. Reach him by e-mail at rway@nc.rr.com.*

# CLOWN COMICS

STOP BY, ANYTIME!

Ann "Tuttles" Sanders

Featuring Jim "Donuts" Donoughe and Connie "Punkin" Morrow

Script inspired by Donald Diamond and adapted by Ann "Tuttles" Sanders



# *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**