

# THE NEW CALLIÖPE

For Members of Clowns of America International

Volume 40 • Number 4



**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**MIKE "BONKERS" COX**

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# 25 Years go

By Lauren Jurgensen

The July/August 1998 issue was all about “What’s new?”

New COAI President, new Executive Committee, and new ideas to improve your clown craft. Keep reading for a roundup of the issue’s highlights, or visit the magazine’s vault at [www.mycoai.com](http://www.mycoai.com) to get a closer look.

Judy “Dear Heart” Quest, who had just been elected the President of COAI, graced the cover with a stunning portrait courtesy of Wanda’s World of Photography—and was the subject of a lovely profile you can find on page 14. Among the other newly elected joeyes to COAI’s Executive Committee were Secretary Teresa Gretton and Treasurer Tony R. Jones. Meanwhile, Cheri Venturi returned for her second term as Executive Vice President, and Sergeant-at-Arms Walter R. Lee celebrated his eighth term.

On page 16, Mary “Sugar Plum” Lostak shared her top tips for staying in control during a performance. Her first piece of advice is to tell the person in charge that it’s your policy to have one or more adults present to supervise the kids. This ensures that you won’t be treated like a babysitter and will help to protect you from false accusations. It also sends a message to the organizers that you are “strictly there as an entertainer.” Check out the column for more tips about how to handle kids and adults who try to stomp your feet or grab your nose, kids who try to get into your stuff, and controlling and closing waiting lines for face-painting.

Karen “Peppermint” Reinholt’s column on page 20 explored how to respect the age of one’s audience. Entertaining children in the nine-to-twelve age group is, of course, quite different than entertaining five-year-olds. Sharing a story from one of her successful events, she wrote, “After welcoming everyone, I explained that I would be performing a magic show. Taking into consideration their age and intelligence, I told them that I fully expected them to try to figure out how things were done. I also explained that some of them would get it right. In addition, I told them that everything I would be doing, they could each do themselves, and, possibly, do it better ... [I also asked] them not to ruin it for their neighbor who might not be figuring it out by telling them how it



was done. Because of this ‘pre-speech,’ I had the very best ‘audience’ in the world that day.”

Turn to page 24 to learn Lee “Juggles” Mullally’s tips for working with different types of foam (sponge rubber foam, closed cell foam, foams in combination) when constructing your next parade prop. You can also see how much the COAI website—and Internet in general—has changed over the last twenty-five years by flipping to page 30, where Agnes “Beep Beep” Donnelly shares her guide to making the most of the COAI website.

Two of the biggest changes to the website? It was located at [www.clown.org](http://www.clown.org), and would automatically play the *Looney Tunes* theme song as soon as the home page had loaded.

The magazine has seen as many changes as the website. Again, you can see those changes (and find fresh ideas and insights) by checking out the magazine’s back catalogue at the vault on [www.mycoai.com](http://www.mycoai.com). Bump a nose! **TNC**

The advertisement features a background image of a waterfall at Niagara Falls, New York, with city lights visible in the distance. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top, it says 'REGISTER TODAY FOR' in white. Below that, in large white letters, is 'COAI'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION'. At the bottom, there are three pieces of information: 'Niagara Falls, New York' on the left, 'www.coaicongression.com' in the center, and 'May 13-17, 2024' on the right.

# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

## MIKE COX

By Lauren Jurgensen

COAI Lifetime Achievement winner Mike “Bonkers” Cox has rarely sought the spotlight. For him, the organization has always been about teamwork—never vanity.

“It’s not about me. I’m just one member of the team,” he said in an interview for the July/August 2018 issue of *The New Calliope*, after being asked to grace the magazine’s cover. He had just been elected President of COAI, an honor that traditionally includes a cover photoshoot. Mike instead pushed to feature all twenty COAI board members on the summer issue’s cover.

A member since 1991, Mike has held four board positions (Midwest Regional Vice President, Sergeant-at-Arms, Executive Vice President, and President). He’s also a lifetime member and former officer of the Mid-Atlantic Clown Association (MACA), a lifetime member of the Southeast Clown Association (SECA) and Virginia Alley #3, and was a member of the since-disbanded Richmond, Virginia non-COAI alley The Funtastics. No wonder he has such respect for the many roles and responsibilities involved in keeping clown organizations active and strong!

Mike wasn’t always a clown. But having worked as a hot air balloon pilot, he already knew a thing or two about whimsy when he joined Virginia Alley #3 in the early nineties. Virginia Alley #3—COAI’s oldest active chartered Alley—was being led by then-President Nancy “Freckles” Davis. At the time, Nancy happened to be teaching an “Introduction to Clowning” course at John Tyler Community College, and a curious Mike enrolled.

The rest, as the saying goes, is history. Mike became known to the clown community as Bonkers. The name is a happy accident, resulting from Mike’s own mispronunciation of his original chosen clown name “Zonkers” when he shared it with his classmates for the first time. (He doesn’t regret the mistake!)

At Virginia Alley #3, Mike grew close to Barbara “Sweet Thang” Ford. They began teaching clown classes together at J. Sargent Reynolds Community College and for Hanover County Parks and Recreation. Not only did the two meet and fall in love as clowns, but they wed as clowns, too. Bonkers and Sweet Thang’s July 2003 wedding at the Ridge Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia was attended by fellow joeys in full clown makeup and regalia.

The wedding was such a magnetic event that the local *Richmond Times Dispatch* sent a reporter to cover it. When the Associated Press picked up the story, Mike and Barbara’s wedding became national news. They remained married until Barbara’s passing in 2019. In July 2020, Mike made the decision to not seek reelection and



Mike “Bonkers” Cox, 2002.

retired after twenty years of service on the COAI Board.

Mike, a clown instructor who takes great pride in seeing his many talented former students go on to become successful clowns, remains eager to share his wealth of clown arts knowledge. In addition to the courses he taught with Barbara, he’s also helped Flossie Bruce with introductory and advanced clown classes in the Richmond region. Mike has also taught at Circus Magic and the Toby the Clown Museum in Lake Placid, Florida.

He’s as passionate about learning as he is about teaching. Among the many workshops, classes, and conventions under



Mike during Clown Week, 2023.

his belt are Advanced Clowning by the Funtastics Clown Alley in Richmond, Virginia; Circus Magic in Williamsburg, Virginia; the Mid-Atlantic Clown Association Convention; the Southeast Clown Association Convention; Kentucky Clown Derby; and every COAI Convention since 1997. “I am always learning from the educational opportunities, as well as from interactions with my peers,” he says, acknowledging how much clowns can learn beyond the classroom doors.

Mike’s other roles include Boat Registration and Titling Supervisor for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries—where he’s worked for over two decades—as well as Santa Claus. For the latter, he maintains a year-round white beard so that’s always prepared for duty during Christmas festivities. Kids have yet to catch on to the fact that Bonkers the Clown is Santa, or that Santa is Bonkers the Clown. “When I’m performing as Bonkers, the kids do not recognize the Santa part of me. Children and parents accept me only as Bonkers the Clown.”

He counts The Virginia Home among his favorite places to clown. Located in Richmond, the facility provides residential care to adults with permanent physical disabilities. “The residents are



Left to right: Barbara and Mike honored as ASK Volunteers of the Year. Mike transforms into Santa in December.

the most appreciative audience when it comes to clowns,” says Mike. “Along with my fellow clowns from Virginia Alley #3, we visit during Clown Week and around the Christmas holiday.” Mike’s other favorite venues include the Alzheimer’s Association Walks and St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital’s fundraisers.

Mike also enjoys volunteering for the Boys & Girls Club of America and the ASK Childhood Cancer Foundation. To this day, he regularly participates in Virginia Alley #3 events, including driving his Volkswagen convertible in the

Fourth of July parade with fellow alley members.

Mike’s friend Patricia “Tickled” Shadel shared the following story about Mike: “In 1992, my little girl had to undergo ear surgery. I was very worried and stressed, but trying not to let the children know. I took them to a smalltown circus. It was wonderful! We sat high in the bleachers so we could see everything. My daughter said, ‘Look, there’s a clown sitting to the left of us.’ He had a skunk that ran around his arm and water poured down his face. He wore a cap with a propeller on top. She asked if she could go say hi. I walked her over



Left: Bonkers and Sweet Thang. Above: Bonkers and Sweet Thang’s ceiling tile at Toby’s clown museum in Lake Placid, Florida, 2010.

# TIMELINE

## Mike "Bonkers" Cox

### COAI Officer dates

July 2000-2004 Elected Mideast Regional Vice President

July 2004-2010 Elected Sergeant at Arms

July 2010-2016 Elected Executive Vice President

July 2016-June 2020 Elected President

### COAI Awards

2003 Excellence In Clowning Award

### COAI

Lifetime member for over twenty-five years

Member of Awards Advisory Council

Past member of Budget Committee, Merchandise Committee

### The New Calliope Article

July/Aug 2003 Article on page 21-22 about how he documented his Excellence In Clowning Award

2016-2020 President's column

### COAI Conventions

1998-present

### COAI Competitions

1999 First competition in Auguste

2001 Won third place Auguste

2003 Won second place Group skits

2004 Won first place Senior

2007 Won third place Single Skit

2007 Won second place Group Skit

### SECA (Southeast Clown Association)

Won Clown Ministry Award

Won various other Competition Awards in makeup and skits

### Circus Magic

Won various Competition Awards

Lifetime member

MACA (Mid-Atlantic Clown Association)

Lifetime member

Won various Competition Awards in makeup and skits

Clown Class Instructor (taught Clownology)

Several Clownology Clown classes at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

Several Clownology Clown classes at John Tyler Community College

Several Clownology Clown classes at Hanover County Parks & Rec Adult Center

Several Clownology Clown classes at Chesterfield County Parks & Rec Adult Center

### Conventions Attended

Circus Magic - set up COAI table with membership info/merchandise in vendor room each year

MACA - set up COAI table with membership info/merchandise in vendor room each year attended

SECA - set up COAI table with membership info/merchandise in vendor room each year attended

COAI - attended each convention from 1998 to present

### Virginia Alley 3

Past President (several terms over thirty years)

Past Vice President (several terms over thirty years)

### MACA

Elected to Board as Director from Virginia after death of Alvin Baum. Served several terms.

*When Mike and Barbara got married in a clown wedding, the Associated Press covered the event.*



top to bottom: Mike Cox with the COAI logo. Glenn Kohlberger and Mike in Mexico, 2008. ?



## HERE'S WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT MIKE COX



*Bonkers on stage at the Funhouse Big 3 Convention in the early 1990s, with Walt Lee (seated).*

to say hi, and I think I had more questions than she did. For example, where does the water that's pouring down your face come from? What makes that skunk run? Mike was very nice and gentle with my little girl. I later found out that he'd been on his break the entire time."

If that's not enough, perhaps Paul S. "Fuddi-Duddy" Kleinberger II's can sum things up. "Simply stated, Mike is a leader whose honors and accomplishments are too numerous to define," said Paul. "COAI would not have the admiration and respect it enjoys in the world community of clowns and comedic entertainers without the continuing efforts of Mike Cox. He is truly worthy of the Lifetime Achievement Award."



*Bonkers in 2008.*

In 1992, my little girl had to undergo ear surgery. I was very worried and stressed, but trying not to let the children know. I took them to a small-town circus. It was wonderful! We sat high in the bleachers so we could see everything. My daughter said, "Look, there's a clown sitting to the left of us." He had a skunk that ran around his arm and water poured down his face. He wore a cap with a propeller on top. She asked if she could go say hi. I walked her over to say hi, and I think I had more questions than she did. For example, where does the water that's pouring down your face come from? What makes that skunk run? Mike was very nice and gentle with my little girl. I later found out that he'd been on his break the entire time.

*Patricia "Tickled" Shadel*

I have known Mike "Bonkers" Cox since 1987. He has always impressed me with his costume and character and his willingness to share. I first met Mike at Circus Magic thirty-five years ago. He has been a participant of our event since then. Bonkers has influenced many in the art of clowning with his contribution to Alley #3 which he as devoted many hours to. He has evolved into a Santa character and continues to bring joy to others with his holiday spirit. The world needs more Bonkers!

*Steve Kissell*

Mike is a gentle, wholesome, caring person who has literally breathed life into COAI. I know this because we served on the COAI board together from 2000 to 2020. As Executive Vice President he learned the bylaws forward, backward, and upside down. We always felt he could answer any bylaw question. In my opinion, Michael "Bonkers" Cox is more than deserving of this prestigious recognition.

*Teresa "Blondi" Gretton*

Mike is what I would describe as the quiet leader. He leads by doing as well as making gentle suggestions to assure whatever function the clown group is involved in that it is successful and professional. He does not try to be the center of attention but tries to assure the group efforts are the center of attention.

*Zebulon V. "Zebo" Saunders, Jr.*

Simply stated, Mike is a leader whose honors and accomplishments are too numerous to define. COAI would not have the admiration and respect it enjoys in the world community of clowns and comedic entertainers without the continuing efforts of Mike Cox. He is truly worthy of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

*Paul S. "Fuddi-Duddy" Kleinberger II*

# Bon Bon and Clown Otis da Banjoe Belly Bring Joy to the Pacific Beach Parade

Clown Otis da Banjoe Belly and Bon Bon had a fantastic time at the Pacific Beach Parade on December 9, 2023. Bon Bon arrived around 10:00 a.m., snagging the perfect parking spot literally within a block of the step-off! Winner, winner, chicken dinner!

Bon Bon turned on her bubble machine immediately, creating and catching “magic bubbles” that captivated the children. Whenever she caught one, she told them that someone around there must be magical. She said the wonder in their eyes was awesome and she believed that each child thought they were the magical one. It was the first time she used the bubble machine—and it was a huge success!

Speaking of success, Bon Bon had striven to shed and lost so much weight since last year that her apron had to be safety pinned. Hooray!

Meanwhile, Clown Otis da Banjoe Belly had a groggy and reluctant start, but got into the spirit when the parade began and had a lot of fun. His ongoing “Jingle Bell” bit, accompanied by his mime skills, delighted the crowd.

The parade itself was perfect. It was maybe a mile long on a flat surface, and it went really slow. They were able to do everything for everyone! Towards the end of the parade, however, the audience thickened, causing the parade to stop briefly and continue at a crawl. Clown Otis da Banjoe Belly found this annoying, but didn't let it ruin his overall good time. He said working with Bon Bon is always a treat because her enthusiasm for clowning is infectious. It made Clown Otis da Banjoe Belly's initial reluctance to be in the parade melt away, and for that he was very grateful. Bon Bon also loves working with Clown Otis da Banjoe Belly because they are both mindful and respectful of each other, and they work the crowds together nicely.

After the parade, they enjoyed tacos at a mom-and-pop restaurant on Garnet Avenue as they watched the rest of the parade. They are both looking forward to performing next year in the Pacific Beach Parade 2024 and other parades.



Far left: Bon Bon and Clown Otis da Banjoe Belly eating tacos after the parade. Left: Bon Bon and Clown Otis da Banjoe Belly having lots of fun at the parade.



# COAI DECLARATIONS OF CANDIDACY

For information on how to vote in the 2024 COAI Elections, see page 8. Please note that no candidates are running for Director of Conventions, Treasurer, or Regional Vice President in the following areas: Latin, International, Northwest, Southeast, and South Central. These positions may be filled by the President with board approval.

## PRESIDENT



**Kynisha Ducre**

I humbly ask for consideration to become President of Clowns of America International in 2024 and do my part to revive the art of clowning internationally. I have clowned professionally for more than twenty years, on six continents and in thirty-five countries. Besides earning a degree in psychology, having a servant heart, and enjoying performing for kids and kids at heart, I'm grateful to have learned balloon twisting, face painting, puppetry, bubble shows, storytelling, hospital clowning, seasonal characters, balloon decor, party games, show development and props, gospel magic, skit development, and so much more from an amazing host of conventions over the years. I've also overseen some weekend mini-camps in local regions, too!

Whether I'm donating my time, performing library shows, birthday parties, or corporate events, being flown to perform, traveling with Patch Adams, entertaining with Bozo, or filming in Studio City, California for upcoming

documentaries, I am a nice and respectful human. I'm super grateful to have the ability to relate to seasoned professionals and those who are young, old, or have limited abilities alike. I am business oriented, accountable, financially astute, and emotionally intelligent to face challenges respectfully.

I truly understand that clowning needs to evolve a bit for children's entertainment, ensuring that all can still marvel at the history of clowning within the United States and abroad. There's no 'I' in Team and no *me* without *you!* Consider a vote for me and you get Daisy the Clown, too!



**Connie M. Morrow**

I have been a member of COAI for twenty-two consecutive years. During that time, I've received the Individual Charlie Award and the Excellence in Clowning Award, and I was honored to win the 2020 Clown of the Year Award. It was my pleasure to be co-host for the 2020 COAI Convention in Niagara Falls, New York. When that was postponed due to COVID-19, I stayed in that position for the successful, and first-ever virtual COAI Convention. With my co-host, we were able to mail out over one hundred goody bags to those who registered for the convention.

My present duty is Northeast Regional Vice President. I have set up a Facebook page where we host monthly challenges with rewards, a monthly newsletter

and virtual Zoom call, and embroidered patches. I have served on various committees, including my present service on the Grievance Committee.

My platform is simple and to the point: I will be *always* be there for the members! Without them, we have no organization! I'm a homebody, so it won't be hard to contact me. The organization and members will be a priority and there will be transparency, so no one is in the dark. I'd also like to set up a presidential video each month to apprise our members of the "State of COAI." As one of our former Presidents used to say, "I bleed COAI." Yes, it runs through my veins.

## VICE PRESIDENT



**Dan "Fitzwilly" Langwell**

As a COAI member, you want a board that works together to make things happen for the good of COAI and the good of clowning. You want to continue the traditions of the past that have made COAI a standout organization as well as enact changes to keep COAI relevant, accessible, and desirable to clowns of all ages around the world.

Having worked with many of our longest-serving board members, I understand where COAI has come from. Working daily in the radio, TV, and digital world, I can see where attention is heading. COAI has made great strides

forward with our new website, online alleys, and “The Vault.” Let’s continue to blend the heritage of COAI with the excitement of the future.

While our members past and present have made COAI the great organization it is, we can’t rest and we need to attract new members. As the leading clown organization, it is our responsibility to share the heart of our art and reinforce the positivity of clowning to the world. As your Executive Vice President, I will work closely with the President and the rest of the board to provide top-notch education, timely information, and a strong community to our members. It is the friendships developed through our conventions, *The New Calliope*, and our online abilities that we draw on. Every vote is important to COAI. Your vote is your voice. Please vote Dan “Fitzwilly” Langwell for Executive Vice President.

**SECRETARY**



**Kesha “LayDee” Beckley**

As the current Membership Director, I believe that my experience and qualifications make me the perfect fit for this role. I have an extensive background in administrative support. Over the last several years on the board and in my current full-time occupation, I have worked in a wide variety of roles. I have gained a deep understanding of the skills and responsibilities required to succeed in this environment. I am confident I have the experience and skills necessary to make an immediate impact within the organization.

**MIDEAST REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**



**Patricia “Tickled” Shadel**

I respectfully announce my candidacy for COAI Mideast Regional Vice President. The Mideast region needs a person who will keep them informed of current and future events. I will focus my energies not only on the Mideast, but on contributing to the future of COAI and trying to bring in the younger generations to keep clowning alive. I will stay in communication with all alleys and members in the region, create a monthly newsletter to share updates on what is happening and a calendar of events, and share ideas for how to do and what not to do. I’m very excited to be involved and work with everyone who has had a positive influence on my journey. My clown “Tickled” came about at a COAI Convention when Jackie “Lollie” Garner told me that I looked like I was “just tickled” to be there, and she was 100 percent correct! I am “tickled” to serve my region. I want to be a part of bringing laughter and enjoyment to all I meet.



**Bobby Semon**

I am Bobby the Clown, also known as Bobby Semon. Two years ago, the board

was looking for someone to volunteer for the position of Mideast Regional Vice President. I talked with my wife and a few other friends, and ultimately decided to pick up the torch. I have tried to reach out to alleys in my region and, as stated when I took office, I would love to travel and visit.

A little history about me: I performed my first paying job at the age of thirteen in Chicago. It was a three-hour picnic and I made fifteen dollars. For the life of me, I have no idea what I did for three hours, but at the age of thirteen, fifteen dollars was a lot of money. Fast forward to April 1970 when I joined the Navy, and I carried my clowning with me for twenty years while having the opportunity to perform in many foreign countries. I retired in April 1990 and have been attempting to make a living at clowning. So far, I haven’t starved or been evicted, and my wife and family still love me.

My outlook on clowning is a bit different than most. If you know me or have heard me talk, you know what I am talking about. I would love the opportunity to serve another two years as the Mideast Regional Vice President and would appreciate your vote in the coming election. One other reminder: I am always available to chat, and there is nothing I love more than talking about family entertainment.

**NORTHEAST REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**



**James Donoughe**

My name is James “Donuts” Donoughe and I respectfully declare my candidacy for COAI Northeast Regional Vice

President. I have been clowning for almost forty years and have been a member of COAI since 2018. I am proud of my achievements and awards, such as the Individual Award (three times), the Charlie Award, and placing in the top ten in competitions in Richmond, Virginia (2018), as well as co-hosting the Virtual COAI Convention after COVID-19 shut us down twice in Niagara Falls. In addition to receiving the Excellence in Clowning Award, I was recently named the COAI 2023 Clown of the Year.

I am proudest of my ability to make people both young and old laugh and forget their troubles, even for a little while. I was the leader in making Niagara Clown Alley a COAI alley, and I'm the current the vice president of our alley. I have also taught and continue to teach various classes in my area and at the Mid-Atlantic Clown Association (MACA).

By the time of our next COAI Convention, I will have been on our board as the Education Director for almost six months. As Education Director, I planned the 2024 Convention's education slate and vendors. I have helped moderate and helped manage the craziness of the region's challenges on the Northeast Facebook page.

As you can tell from my history and articles, I love clowning. I look forward to seeing where this journey takes us all, and to bringing others into the family we call clowning.

As the current Membership Director, I believe my experience and qualifications make me the perfect fit for the role of COAI Secretary.

**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR**



**Bob "Bunky" Gretton**

I have been a member in good standing since I joined COAI in 1979. I have held the positions of competition chairman, member of the competition team, chair of International Clown Week, chair of the International Ambassador Program, and member of the awards advisory council. I was awarded the 2009 COAI Clown of the Year and in 2015, I received the COAI Lifetime Achievement Award.

As the Director of Membership, I will share with the members the guidance, insight, and support needed to make their journey in the world of clowning rewarding. I will do my best to promote the awards program and encourage members to nominate deserving clowns for the COAI Clown of the Year, Excellence In Clowning, and Lifetime Achievement awards. I will open a line of communication where members can get in touch with me to ask questions about their clowning.

**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**



**Alene Kraus**

I previously served during the pandemic when we added an online monthly component with the Zoom Booms. The Zoom Booms gave us the opportunity to learn, make connections, meet each other, and forge friendships online. Helping to plan the 2022 Convention, although challenging, was a task that offered another opportunity to provide the best possible learning experiences for our membership. I would now like to continue my work in support of clown education in COAI.

**HOW TO VOTE IN THE COAI BOARD ELECTION**

Voting is simple. Just follow the directions below.

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! Thank you for participating!

Voting begins April 15, 2024. No votes will be accepted after midnight June 7, 2024, Eastern Time.



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**SAVE BIG MONEY BY REGISTERING EARLY**

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**JUNE**  
**6-7-8-9**



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**- BEFORE APRIL 14, 2024 -**  
**SEE REGISTRATION FORM IN THIS ISSUE**

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



## PARENTS ARE PEOPLE, TOO!

By Skip Way

Are adults receiving the same entertainment value from your shows as the children? If the answer is no or “I’m not sure,” you’re ignoring the very people who refer and book you! Professional hint: Kids don’t book you and kids don’t pay your fees!

We all know that children enjoy simple jokes and slapstick humor. Adults require a more sophisticated and nuanced approach. As entertainers, we should ensure that every member of every audience receives the full benefit of our entertainment skills.

Let’s begin with our stage set. Children are drawn to the bright colors and exaggerated designs of your props and stage décor. Adults will appreciate and quickly share detailed and intricate easter eggs built into your props. For example, a change bag used for vanishing things with the letters IRS embroidered onto one side or an expensive stage piece with an errant Dollar Tree sticker. Think outside of the factory paint scheme!

Writing and performing cerebral humor for adults takes training and effort. Sure, you can hit the usual collection of books featuring corny one-liners, just like every other kidshow entertainer in your area. Do you really want a parent to say, “Hey, Marvo the Mediocre used those same jokes last week”? Be original! Inquire at your local comedy club about stand-up workshops and lessons. Take the time to master this vital facet of our profession.

Know your audience! Respect the parental sensibilities of the adults at a children’s party! Avoid humor that attacks sacred cows like homeschooling, family issues, traditions, and religious beliefs. I have a personal dislike for these vandalous and tattletale holiday shelf elves. I tested a joke blasting them at one show and it fell flat. Some parents love these little creeps. Poof! Joke deleted!

Keep clear of jokes that perpetuate harmful stereotypes. Clean comedy should be inclusive and respectful to all. Use your humor to support a child’s respect for parents. I credit my mother with teaching me mindreading skills because, “Mothers read minds!

When you’re doing something wrong, who *always* knows?” Use this line and you will win the respect and admiration of every mother in the room! (Dads, on the other hand, know really cool stuff and really bad jokes!)

Clever wordplay such as puns, double entendre, and clever twists on words are ideal ways to create clean and witty jokes. Humor that taps into shared experiences, relatable situations and everyday scenarios works best. One of my favorite opening bits uses the old Vaudeville routine of miscounting two bananas as three. The miscount tickles the children, but the added “It’s Common Core math!” boosts adult smiles into laughs.

Irony and satire highlight the absurdities and contradictions of everyday adult life. Include observational humor addressing the daily interactions between parent and child. “You traded your shoes for what?!” Pointing out the funny quirks or oddities in everyday life will set adult heads to nodding and laughing. Check out Art Linkletter or Bill Cosby’s *Kids Say the Darndest Things* for inspiration.

Yes, we are kidshow entertainers and, yes, our focus is on the wee ones seated on the floor before us. But wherever we find children, we are bound to find adults. Entertaining everyone in the room will make you stand out from the crowd and send a flood of rave reviews and referrals your way! **TNC**

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



# MOOSEBURGER CAMP 2024

## August 5th thru 11th 2024

with special guest Randy Christensen

- Polish your performances for skits.
- Laugh & learn with clowns like you!
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# CLOWN MAKEUP APPLICATION

By Tricia “Pricilla Mooseburger” Manuel



I hope these basic instructions can help you feel more comfortable applying your clown makeup. They work for any brand of grease-based (oil-based) makeup.

If you are having problems with your makeup staying on, cracking, or looking grainy, try these steps. Be sure to wipe down your face with alcohol. Single-use cotton pads soaked in alcohol are available at pharmacies. Try Mehron Colorset Powder, which is finer and gives a better set.

Do not spray with water. Spray your finished makeup with Mehron Barrier Spray, or another setting spray, to lock in the colors and the powder. Mehron and Ben Nye are my makeup brands of choice. They work well together and provide great results. In this article, I mention Mehron products to keep it simple.

## Auguste Makeup Application

Wipe face with alcohol wipes to remove excess oil.

Draw white shapes around your eyes and mouth using the Mehron ProPencil Slim™ or a brush. This can be a defined shape or a more blended one.

Fill in the shapes with white grease makeup, using a brush, sponge, or finger. Pat smooth.

Draw the shape for your mouth. Clean up the edges with a cotton swab, or use a wet wipe to get off any extra makeup.

Apply flesh-colored foundation on the rest of your face. Pat smooth. There are many colors of foundation that you can use as a base, and they will look different on different skin tones. For example, Light 4 for fair skin tones, Medium 2 for medium skin tones, and Warm Honey for deeper skin tones. You can blend white and flesh-colored foundations together for a softer look.

Time to blend. This is the time to do any wet blending of grease: eye shadow, cheeks, and contours.

Add eyebrows and eyeliner using a slim pencil or brush. Lightly powder and brush off the excess.

Shake a little of the Mehron Colorset Powder into a plastic dish with a lid. Press the powder puff into the powder, then press it on your face. Repeat this process until your face is covered. Use a powder brush to sweep off the excess. Close your eyes and raise your eyebrows to get the powder into the lid creases.

For extra eye color, brush on Mehron iNtense Pro Pressed Pigments eye shadow.

Apply a waterproof brand of black mascara. This will make your eyes really stand out, and it gets the powder off of your lashes. Guys, ask a lady friend to give you tips on how to use mascara.

Want rosy cheeks? Now is the time to apply a bright, dry rouge. I like Mehron’s Wine Berry Cheek Powder for white





face, and Bold Red for Auguste. It does not need to be powdered because it is already dry!

If you're using glitter, this is the step in the process when you should apply it. Use a fingertip, squeeze bottle, or brush to apply it. Guys, this may not be for you, but judges are warming up to the idea.

Spritz Mehron Barrier Spray on your face to bring back brightness and remove powdery residue. Your makeup will crack less and last longer.

Glue on your nose. **Warning:** Be sure to carefully read and follow all glue instructions for the product you are using!

### White-Face Makeup Application

Wipe face with alcohol wipes to remove excess oil.

Apply a half tablespoon of white base makeup on your fingertips and rub it together until it feels warm. Spread it over your face. Rub it into pores, eyelids, and any crevices or creases. Use your fingertips and the palms of your hands to pat it smooth. The patting will even out the makeup over your skin so that there are no streaks. You can also use a sponge wedge to apply clown white.

Use cotton swabs to draw the outline of your mouth makeup.

If you are doing any wet blending of colors, do it now. That is grease makeup on grease makeup.

Apply pink or red grease on your cheeks. Be careful not to use too much or too little.

Powder well with Mehron Colorset Powder (see auguste application above).

Apply red grease on mouth. Add eyeliner and eyebrows. Lightly powder.

Add Mehron Cheek dry rouge or blush in either Wine Berry or Bold Red.

Brush on Mehron iNtense Pro™ Pressed Pigments eye shadow.

If you want a glitter nose, use red grease to draw a dot on your nose. Press loose red glitter into the grease.

Apply another spritz of Mehron Barrier Spray on your face to bring back brightness and remove powdery residue. This helps your makeup last longer and prevents cracking.

### Tramp or Hobo Makeup Application

Follow the directions for Auguste face, but add a beard! A beard can be black or gray. Be careful not to use too much black or gray for your beard, you can always add more. A stipple sponge will help you get a good whisker-like texture without adding too much makeup. For a softer look, use a sponge. Try gray for the beard base, then use a stipple sponge to add a little black for the whiskers. Apply your beard on your face where a beard would naturally grow. Gently fade the edges of the beard down onto the neck.

*Need some help? I am happy to answer any of your makeup questions! Call 320-963-6277. You can also subscribe to our free monthly newsletter at [www.mooseburger.com](http://www.mooseburger.com). TNC*

*Tricia Manuel is the unmistakable Pricilla Mooseburger. She is the founder of Pricilla Mooseburger Originals, Mooseburger Clown Arts Camp, and the nonprofit Red Nose Readers. Learn more at [www.mooseburger.com](http://www.mooseburger.com)*



# CLOWN COMICS

## ★ THE PERFECT DATE

Ann "Tuttles" Sanders  
Featuring Alene "Rufflez" Kraus  
Skippack, Pennsylvania



Name: Rufflez



Describe your perfect date.



That's a tough one.



I'd have to say...



October 4th! It's not too hot and not too cold.

