

THE NEW CALLIÖPE

for Members of Clowns of America International

July / August 2022
Volume 39 • Number 4



**Tim
“Sawdust”
Laynor**

**Lifetime
Achievement Award**

Your COAI Officers

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Timothy “Sawdust” Laynor

By Rose Cardenas

Tim Laynor likes to call himself a “homeschooled” clown.

He credits his wife, Ann “Tuttles” Sanders, for giving him his start and teaching him everything he knows about clowning.

“She’s the one who lit the spark and continually fanned the flame of clowning,” Tim recalls. “When we first started dating, she showed me her scrapbook of her start in clowning through a community college course and Virginia Alley 3.”

Tim joined COAI, as well as Richmond, Virginia’s Alley 3, in 2000. “I didn’t really want to venture into clowning, but I always accompanied Ann. When they were shy a person for one of their skits, I was in. After that, I became a regular at all Alley 3 gatherings.” He also went on to become a member of the World Clown Association.

When Tim started clowning, he pulled together a costume from whatever he already had: oversized yellow jeans, blue tennis shoes, and an orange t-shirt. When he decided to improve his costume, he couldn’t find anything he liked, so he joined a sewing class to learn how to make his own. He crafted a pair of baggy pants, with suspenders, which became his signature costume.



As President of Kolonial Klowns Tim accepts the 2012 Alley CHARLIE Award. Right: Tuttles and Sawdust.

When asked about the creation of his clown character, Tim said, “I didn’t mind being the butt of any joke, so my wife suggested I become an auguste or character clown. I usually played the fool in most of our skits, and kids love to expose me as the fool. I tried not to talk in any of our skits. Instead, facial expressions and exaggerated body movements were my vehicle to bring laughter from the kids.”

A man of many talents, Tim took his clown name from one of his hobbies—woodworking—to become “Sawdust.” At the beginning of his clowning career, Tim and Ann helped found the Kolonial Klowns of COAI Alley 357 in Williamsburg, Virginia. He used his woodworking skills to support Alley 357 by building props.

In 2002, Tim packed up his truck with props, costumes, and three fellow alley members and headed to New York for his first COAI Convention. The alley’s skit “The New Recruits” scored high in the competition. He describes the performance, which he did as a relatively new clown, as the most memorable moment in his clowning career. After the awards presentation, Tim said, “After thirty years of active duty in the US Air Force, nothing is as nerve-racking as competition at COAI!”

Tim continued to compete and win in various categories. He has contributed his woodworking, construction, and sewing skills over the years, often using simple household items to construct beautiful props for the Kolonial Klowns’ parades and competition pieces. This includes a train engine, as well as three cardboard boats that separated in the middle when sawed apart for a “I Saw Three Ships” themed parade.

He says, “I have accumulated an awesome arsenal of tools and have created some neat

Tim “Sawdust” Laynor

CLOWNING TIMELINE

- 2000 – Present** Clowns of America International COAI Number 26602
- 2000 – Present** World Clown Association
- 2000 – 2002** Virginia Clown Alley #3 – COAI
- 2000 – Present** Kolonial Klowns Alley #357 – COAI
Alley Chartered by COAI May 2002
- 2002 – Present** President – Kolonial Klowns, Alley #357 COAI Offices
- 2002** **May** Making Props From Pool Noodles – Instructor
Kolonial Klowns Alley #357 – Williamsburg, VA
- 2005** **March** Making Props - Kazoo Horns- Instructor
Kolonial Klowns Alley #357 – Williamsburg, VA
- 2005** **October** Make’n’Take Props-Instructor
Kolonial Klowns Alley #357 – Williamsburg, VA
- 2005 – 2010** Southeast Clown Association
- 2006 – 2007** Mid-Atlantic Clown Association
- 2008** Chair – COAI Election Committee
- 2009** The Joey
Clowns International – England
- 2010** Clowns of America International Excellence in Clowning Award
- 2010** Chair – COAI Election Committee
- 2010 – 2016** Member of COAI Competition Committee
Competition Registration and Scoring
- 2011** COAI International Ambassador
- 2011** Commonwealth of Kentucky Commissioned of Kentucky Colonel
- 2011** Skits
Clown Classes
Jamestown 4-H Camp – Jamestown, VA
- 2012** Chair – COAI Election Committee
- 2012** Presidents’ Volunteer Service Award – Silver Level
- 2012** Glitter Tattoos
Kolonial Klowns Alley #357 – Williamsburg, VA
- 2013** Clowns of America International Clown of the Year
- 2015** ERIESistible Clowns COAI Convention, 2nd Best Overall, Costume- Pirate Fest and Folly Theme Party
- 2018** Co-Winner Theme Party Group Costume
“Green Acres – Ralph and Alf”
- 2018** COAI Convention, Richmond, VA
- 2019** Marketing, Gloucester, VA
- 2019** Performance with Riz, Croaker, VA
- 2019** Making A Tip Jar
Kolonial Klowns Alley #357 – Williamsburg, VA
- 2020** Dave Hill Presents Dave Hill Stonehouse, VA
- 2020** Circus Magic, Williamsburg, VA
- 2020** World Clown Association Virtual Convention
Face Painting, Balloons, and Make Up (Medical Character)- Participation
- 2020** COAI Scholarship - COAI Convention, Niagara, New York (Declined due to 2021 COAI Convention going virtual)
- 2020** Magic So Easy A Cave Clown Can Do It (Video)
WCA Members Forum Facebook
- 2021** Circus Magic Arts and Ministry Convention Wall of Fame, Williamsburg, VA (Convention cancelled due to COVID. Event has been re-scheduled for 2022.)
- 2021** Winner World Clown Super Bowl Commercial Video Contest
- 2021** COAI Virtual Convention
- 2021** World Class Association Virtual Convention
- 2021** Kolonial Klowns was able to meet face-to-face for the first time since December 2019
- 2022** Tim helped organize the 20th Anniversary of Kolonial Klowns
- Contributions to *The New Calliope***
- Jan/Feb 2019** Clown Comics: “Name Game” Page 38
- Mar/Apr 2019** Clown Comics: “Birds of a Feather” Page 38
- May/June 2019** Summer Fun: “Ice Cream” Page 11
Clown Comics: “Eye-O” Page 30
- Sep/Oct 2019** Clown Comics: “Free Ride” Page 30
- Nov/Dec 2019** Clown Comics: “Free Ride” Page 31
- Jan/Feb 2020** Clown Comics: “Name Game” Page 31 (Photography)
- March/April 2020** Clown Comics: “Playball !” Page 31 (Photography)
- May/June 2020** Clown Comics: “Three Wishes” Page 31 (Photography)
- June 2020** Editor’s Choice Award Presented by Samuel Patrick Smith, Editor of The New Calliope
- July/August 2020** Clown Comics: “What’s the Score?” Page 31 (Photography)
- Sep/Oct 2020** “Feeling Topsy” Page 31 (Author)
Clown Comics: “Your Move” Page 31 (Participant)
- Nov/Dec 2020** Loop the Loop: “Magic in a Moment” Page 21 (Author)
Clown Comics: “Sole Food” Page 31 (Photography)
- Jan/Feb 2021** Loop the Loop: “Magic in a Moment” Page 28 (Author) (Reprint, with new photographs that were not included in November/December 2020 edition)
Clown Comics: “Birthday Surprise” Page 31 (Participant)
- March/April 2021** Clown Comics: “The Eyes Have It” Page 31 (Photography)
- May/June 2021** Clown Comics: “Eat Like A Caveman” Page 31 (Participant as Grogg the Cave Clown)



Clockwise from top left: Williamsburg Christmas Parade, Williamsburg, Virginia, 2007. Left to right: Tom "Shoeperman" Bailes, Jerry "Dr. Dufus" Dodson, Tim "Sawdust" Laynor, Terri "Belly Buttons" Hunter, Ann "Tuttles" Sanders, and Martha "Dr. Giggle" Dodson. Sawdust. The 2015 COAI Competition Committee. Front row, left to right: Cindy "Peepers" Kella, John "Kris Krunch" Kral, Cathy "TOTS" Mackey (Competition Chair), and Ann "Tuttles" Sanders. Back row: Tim "Sawdust" Laynor, Shirley "Daisy" Lee, and Walt "Wally" Lee. Not pictured: Paula and Bill LeBlanc. Sharing a laugh with a First Night 2009 visitor at a Kolonial Klowns Fund Raiser, Williamsburg, Virginia.

props for clowning. I'll make any prop we need and teach class in prop making, too. Pool noodles and a glue gun can make a great prop in just a few minutes." Evelyn "Giggles" Smith says, "His creativity with props and suggestions for [Circus Magic, Williamsburg, VA] Spirit Contest performance ideas helped the Alley earn the reputation for presenting consistently entertaining and award-winning entries." John Kral adds, "Tim's practice, hard work, and determination have paid off in perfecting his clown persona, Sawdust. He is constantly improving his skills by attending conventions and workshops and perpetuates the art by teaching others. He has clowning in his heart, and it shows in his performances."

Tim's philosophy of clowning is "keep it clean, keep it kid friendly, and keep it funny." He continues by saying, "Though we're here for children's entertainment, we also play to the adults, the moms and dads, and they appreciate good, clean fun, whether they admit it or not."

Though many attest to Tim's contributions to clowning, he states that his wife, Ann, has been his greatest

influence. He says, "I may have been elected our alley's president, but she has mentored our alley from the start and continues to do so. We continually collaborate on the alley's needs. She has challenged me and mentored me more than any mainstream clown teacher."

Tim has been responsible for many of the Kolonial Klowns' operations, including contributing to the newsletter, *Kolonial Krier*, presenting programs, and prop construction. He also represents and speaks on behalf of the alley to the media, having been featured and photographed for various local newspaper and magazine articles. Tim has a willingness to organize, teach, and share clowning with all ages. In addition to his classes for his alley, Tim has taught clowning classes at the Jamestown 4H Camp and Williamsburg United Methodist Church Summer Music.



Top: Ann "Tuttles" Sanders and Tim "Sawdust" Laynor are the only married couple to both be named COAI Clown of the Year. Bottom: Tim "Sawdust" Laynor in a 2022 photo shoot by his wife, Ann Sanders.

International Clown Week is an annual event when Tim's skills and activities really shine. In 2012, in support of the Kolonial Klowns' bid for the CHARLIE award, he took a leave of absence from his full-time job to give himself more time to contribute to International Clown Week's activities. Tim contacted the local media, submitted requests for proclamations, and participated in live interviews. However, these were not his only contributions. He made over two hundred Smile Rocks and Spoons Full of Laughter for distribution in retirement homes and hospitals. He designed and produced specialized car magnets for alley members to display during Clown Week.

One year, Tim visited several children's summer classes. As he entered the room he saw that a small child was crying. Sawdust retrieved a ball from his bag and rolled it around on the floor, catching the child's eye. His wife recalls, "It wasn't long before the boy was tossing the ball with his newfound friend [Sawdust]." Another child began to cry when Sawdust was preparing to leave the class. When the child's teacher asked why he was crying, the child replied, "I don't want the clown to leave."

Pam "Bubbles" Bacher writes, "Tim has captured the spirit of COAI ... he exemplifies many wonderful aspects of clowning. He has touched the hearts of those who know him with the joy of a true clown spirit and brought inspiration to his fellow clowns."

Tim has participated in dozens of Annual Blessing of the Clowns celebrations during International Clown Week. Tim built the skit props, but also helped with set-up, food prep, and post-celebration cleanup. Tim has found unique ways to promote Clown Week, including geocaching events, letterboxing events, and special shirts and stickers.

A skilled photographer, Tim has made extensive use of his camera to serve the clowning world. He uses his Japanese heritage and military background as a foundation for his work, to which he also

Left: Sawdust meeting and greeting prior to the start of the 2019 Gloucester Daffodil Festival Parade. Right: Tim celebrates National Clown Week, 2012.



adds his professionalism, creativity, and good heart. John Kral writes, “If there were a set of skills one has to have in order to become a clown, I would guess that a sense of humor, compassion, a love for what you do, showmanship, and a healthy dose of talent would top the list. Tim has all those attributes and a whole lot more.”

The New Calliope has benefited greatly from featuring Tim’s photographs. He has received the Editor’s Choice Award three times. First at the 2007 COAI convention for excellence in photography, and later in 2020 and 2021, when he shared it with his wife for their support of *The New Calliope*’s “Clown Comics.” In 2010, Tim earned COAI’s Excellence in Clowning Award, and in 2013, he joined his wife as COAI Clown of the Year (Ann earned the title in 2007, making them the first and only married couple to hold this honor). Tim has served on COAI’s Competition Committee and Elections Committee.

Tim loves to travel the world and, because of his desire to promote clowning wherever he goes, was appointed a COAI International Ambassador in 2011. Ann says, “Whether aboard a cruise ship or a tour bus, Tim never misses the opportunity to tell fellow travelers about his

experiences as a clown.” He takes the latest issue of *The New Calliope* when he travels and, at times, shares his copies with other travelers.

During the Covid pandemic, Tim kept up with his fellow clowns on the Kolonial Klowns Facebook page. Evelyn writes, “His idea was to give homebound clowns something to keep them busy as well as a way to get clowns to explore the information posted on *my-coai.com*.” He created virtual and socially distanced activities for the 2020 Clown Week. All his activities contributed to the Kolonial Klowns winning submission for the 2020 CHARLIE Award. In addition, Tim donated five hundred dollars of canned goods for a local food pantry and helped construct fabric face masks for a fundraiser for the local Humane Society which raised over thirteen hundred dollars.

In her nomination letter, Connie “Punkin” Morrow wrote, “To say Tim is multi-talented is an understatement! Tim is well versed in the use of a computer, has an uncanny mechanical ability when it comes to making props, is a talented clown, an artistic face painter, a photographer, an extraordinary leader, is a driving force behind Alley 357, is known for service to the community and

for over twenty years has been an enthusiastic supporter of COAI.”

Evelyn adds, “Tim is a well-rounded clown exhibiting many skills and enthusiasm for the art of clowning. All of us who have worked with him and all who have watched him perform either in face painting, skits, or walking a parade route think of him with deep affection and appreciation for all that he has done for Kolonial Klowns, COAI, and the art of clowning. He brings laughter and fun to the Alley as well as happiness and joy that he shares with all who come in contact with him.”

When shoulder surgery sidelined Tim, he was still able to join his wife on stage (Circus Magic 2022) for a skit paying tribute to Ring of Honor Inductee Regina “Girl Friend” Onley. Tim has used his wide range of talents and skills to make incredible contributions to the art of clowning.

Ann was the 2014 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, and Tim has once again followed in her big clown shoes. They are now the second couple to hold this honor with Bob and Teresa Gretton being the first. COAI feels privileged to show their deep appreciation for Tim Laynor by honoring him with the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award. **TNC**



From the President

Adam Schill

Hello, COAI! First things first. I want to congratulate our new board members! If you haven't noticed we have a couple of new faces, and a couple of familiar faces who are returning to the board after some time off. Jim "Jay J" Caffrey is returning as Director of Conventions and went straight to work as soon as he found out he would be officially coming on the board! I'm excited to see where he takes us the next couple of years. Angel "Jobolin" Morales is back in action as our Latin Regional Vice President and has been working diligently to get his region plugged back in.

We also have a couple of new faces! You probably already know them, as they have been active members, but are new to the board. Patti "Jazzi" Ummel is joining us as our Midwest RVP, and Jerry "Bogo" Gill is coming on as our treasurer.

We do still have an opening for our Southeast RVP, so if you're in the states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, or South Carolina, and would like to contribute to the longevity of COAI by representing your region on the board, we'd love to have you! My contact information is on page 2 of this issue.

I would also like to thank you for your patience on the recent delay in receiving *The New Calliope*. I know that you look forward to this great magazine. Unfortunately, like everywhere else these days, staffing has been an issue. When it takes a certain number of staff to efficiently produce a top-quality magazine, but you are running on less than that, unfortunately there are not many other options other than for things to get delayed occasionally.

I want to thank Sammy Smith, our editor, for his hard work. He always goes way above and beyond his contracted duties and helps us out as much as humanly possible. We get way more than our money's worth with Sammy, and I am grateful for it.

I would also ask for some grace from some of our longtime members. Our board is one hundred percent volunteer. We donate our time to this organization. (Actually

it's in our bylaws that we *can't* be compensated for anything.) And some of us, especially when working on conventions, etc., put as much, if not more, time into COAI than we do to our full-time jobs. Unfortunately, that means that we sometimes must sacrifice family time, and for those of us who are self-employed, sometimes income, to make sure that COAI duties are taken care of.

This also means that sometimes in the slower times we must put COAI on the back burner for a month or two to get caught up in other areas of our life, to just survive.

I've written at length several times about how if we don't progress and move our organization forward, it will become stagnant and wither away, so I'm not going to continue to beat a dead horse. But I would ask those who have been the most vocal lately about things not being done the way they used to be, to please go back and read my columns in past issues of *The New Calliope*.

We will continue to have a fantastic organization with a rich heritage and a bright future as we remain open to new ideas and try to serve as many people as possible. Whatever else you do, please be an Ambassador of Joy! **TNC**

COAI Election Results and Board Appointments

Your 2022–2024 COAI Board of Directors is featured on page 2.

Our 2022 election had no contested positions after one candidate for Director of Conventions withdrew. The position of Treasurer has been filled by appointment with Board approval.

RVP vacancies also will be appointed by the President and approved by the Board.

A cover story on our re-elected President, Adam Schill, will appear in the November/December issue.



Remembering
**RINGLING BROS.
 AND
 BARNUM & BAILEY**
CLOWN COLLEGE

By Ron Severini



Circus clown props shown at the RBBC Clown College.

It was said, that when Mr. Irvin Feld and his brother Israel Feld purchased “The Greatest Show on Earth” in 1967, there were only thirteen circus clowns remaining in the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus’ clown alley. It was jokingly quipped that those thirteen clowns could professionally fall down, but it was questionable if they could get back up again. This remaining group of clowns averaged sixty-five years of age. The future of the American circus clown was in jeopardy. With the new Ringling owners having future plans to quickly grow their circus, including adding a completely new second touring unit, something had to be done to perpetuate the art and craft of circus clowning.

A brilliant new idea was created and put into place. As a result of brainstorming between the Felds and several of the remaining veteran circus clowns, a training program was crafted and put in place. With the help and support of master clowns Otto Griebing, Lou Jacobs and Bobby Kay, as well as another wonderful veteran tramp clown, Danny Chapman, the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown College was established. It held its first session in the fall of 1968. These veteran master clowns became

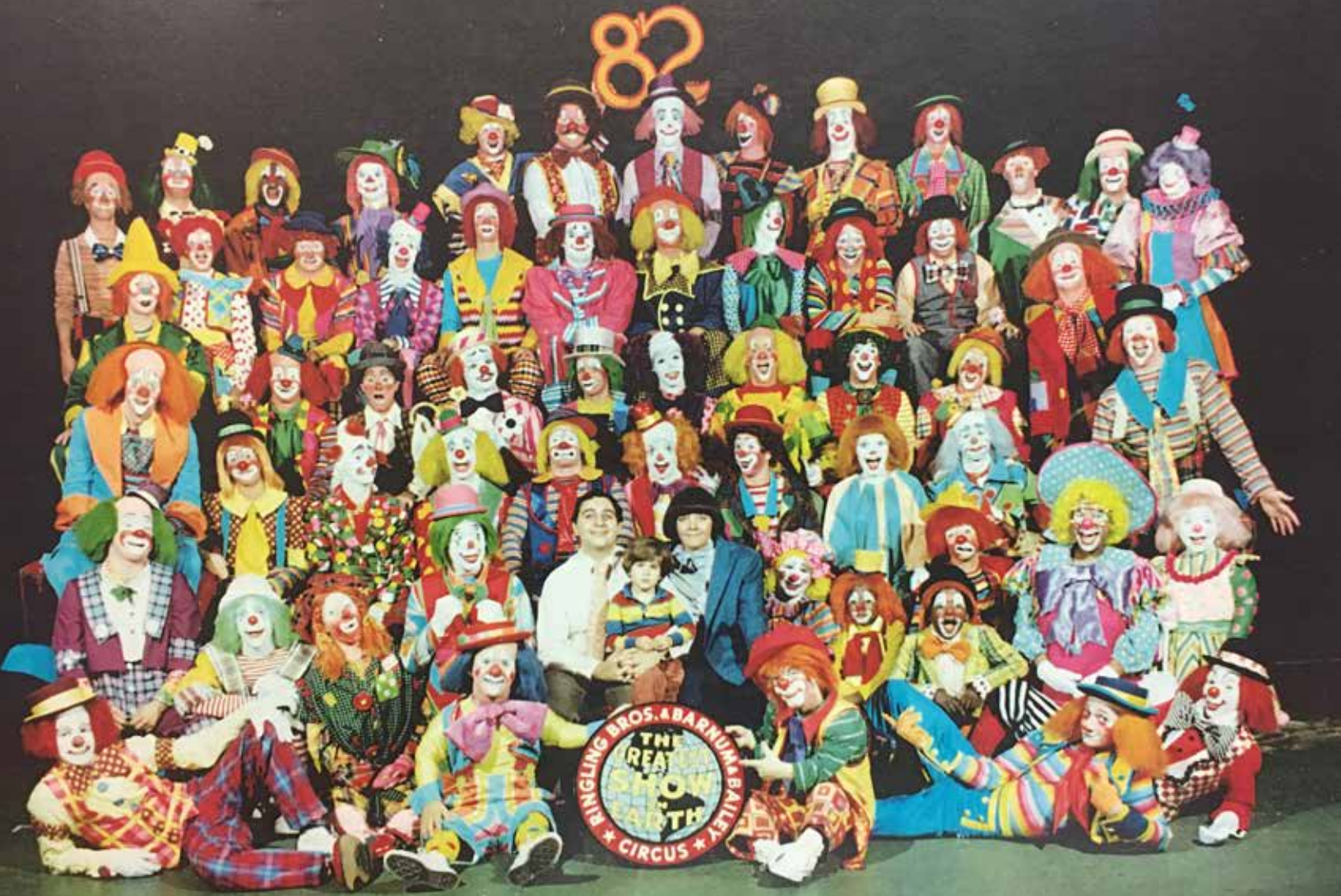
the first instructors at the college. This world-famous program was considered by many as the ultimate clown boot camp.

Clown College was established as a tuition-free program, so any interested American candidate could apply without concern of affordability. Applicants needed to submit an extensive application form, designed specifically to give the admissions directors a clear understanding of the applicant’s psychological well-being, interests, health, seriousness, and previous experience. Live open auditions were conducted along the circus’ annual route. These auditions were an efficient way to generate interest in the Clown College as well as aid the admissions representatives in meeting the candidates in person. The public relations coverage was also fabulous and helped to spread

awareness about this new clown training program and the circus in many of the cities where the circus was appearing. Now, with this new opportunity, interest from both male and females swept across America. Young adults having a sincere interest and desire in running away and joining the circus as a clown could actually apply. As many as six thousand applications were received annually by the enrollment office. It was established that there would be a maximum of sixty students accepted each year, and one session per year would be conducted. The competition was fierce. An applicant’s chances



Clown Alley: the Blue Unit in 1976.



Blast from the past: The RBBB Clown College Class of 1982 poses for their graduation photo. Note Pricilla Mooseburger at top right.

of acceptance were one in a hundred. The program started off as an eight-week program and eventually grew to a full eleven-week intensive course of study. Classes were conducted six days a week, eight to twelve hours per day. The program included classes in basic clowning, the teaching of traditional clown routines, circus skills (acrobatics, juggling, stilt walking, and unicycle), makeup, costuming, and all facets of visual comedy from Chaplin to Keaton and the Three Stooges to Warner Bros. cartoons. Most of all, the program was devoted to the creation of new clowns and new clown gags that could eventually be incorporated into the Ringling shows. In a sense, Clown College acted as a think tank for clowning at the Greatest Show on Earth in terms of comic material, as well as clever new makeup designs, costuming,

and character definition. For the students, the ultimate goal was to secure a year-long circus contract upon graduation. Contracts were only offered to the funniest and the best of the students. The Clown College program was in fact an extended audition for the Greatest Show on Earth. Audiences of varying ages were invited in to experience the final graduation performance, as well as media photographers, TV cameras, radio interviewers, and newspaper interviewers. This was all to prepare each graduate awarded a season-long contract to be ready for real life on the circus.

Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Clown College ran for thirty years (1968–1997). It produced some of the greatest circus clowns to ever perform within the show in the latter part of the twentieth century. Some graduates stayed

as a clown for many years, while others were promoted to alternate positions within the company. Some found that clowning just wasn't for them, and they left after their one-year commitment was completed. It was a show business milestone. Some of the more illustrious alumni include Penn Jillette (from Penn & Teller); theatrical comedic genius Bill Irwin; Academy Award nominated actor David Strathairn; Murray Horwitz, the creative force behind the hit musical, *Ain't Misbehavin'*; Steven Glover, better known as Steve-O from MTV's *Jackass* fame; Oscar-winning makeup artist Steve LaPorte; and the list could continue for many pages. The program eventually catapulted the careers of many other very prominent artists in show business, including producers, directors, writers, set designers, as well as comedy jugglers,



Top: Clown legend Lou Jacobs teaches "levitation." Bottom: The inimitable Otto Griebing instructs students in the art of fancy footwork.

comedy magicians, and stand-up comedians. It is certainly a highlighted item on every alumni resume!

In its heyday, there were as many as a hundred fifty clowns employed annually by Ringling projects around the world. This total included thirty clowns on the Ringling Red Unit; thirty clowns on the Ringling Blue Unit; twenty clowns on the Ringling Gold Unit in Japan; twenty clowns at Ringling Bros. Circus World in Haines City, Florida; twelve clowns performing at music and circus festivals around the country; thirty clowns appearing in the summer months at Disneyland's Circus Fantasy; and twenty clowns returning to teach at Ringling Bros. Clown College each fall.

I was lucky enough to be accepted as a student and a graduate of the 1971 Ringling Bros. Clown College. In 1978, I became the very first graduate to become the Clown College's Dean and Director. Clown College was originally located in Venice, Florida, the home of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's winter quarters. When Ringling

Bros. left Venice in the 1990s, following a dispute over the local railroad, Clown College moved to Baraboo, Wisconsin, home of the Circus World Museum, which is located on the site of the original Ringling Bros. Circus' winter quarters. Clown College eventually relocated to Sarasota until it closed in 1997. Its deans were Mel Miller (1968), Bill Ballantine (1969–1977), Sandy and Ron Severini (1978–1983), Ron Severini (1984), Steve Smith (1985–1995), Rob Mermin and Dick Monday (1995), and Dick Monday (1996–1997). In 1988 and 1989, there was also Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown College Japan, located in Tokyo. Clown College was known as the greatest visual comedic training program ever developed in the twentieth century to find and train funny men and women in the ancient and honorable art form of clowning and visual comedy.

Irvin Feld died in 1984, and the College passed into the hands of Irvin's son, Kenneth. Kenneth Feld became the producer of the Greatest Show on Earth, and ultimately the CEO of Feld Entertainment. Ringling operated Clown College through 1997, when it eventually closed. During those thirty years of operation, it graduated a very select group of only 1,400 students. If not for Mr. Irvin Feld's original idea, there would never have been a Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown College. As I have always said, Mr. Feld was a man with limited eyesight but amazing



Bev "Rebo" Bergeron teaches at Clown College, November 1982.

Below: On a break from unicycle class. Right top: Warming up—and clowning around—before class. Right bottom: A full house awaits their next Clown College lecture.



Above: Detail of artwork from the 1973 Clown College diploma. Below: Detail of text from the Clown College diploma.

vision! As far as I am concerned, all the graduates of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown College, as well as Clowning in America, owe an enormous debt to this visionary! He absolutely loved clowns and loved Clown College. He always worked tirelessly to make the program the greatest it could be!

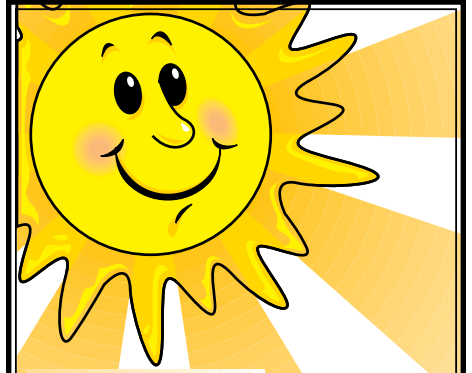
Ron Severini is the author of Ringling Remembered: Through the Eyes of a Circus Clown, from which this story is excerpted, with additional photos from Mr. Severini's collection. You can find his book on Amazon. For more stories, visit his blog at www.theSeveriniCompany.com.

the Respectful Title of New Clown and in recognition of satisfactory completion of the Program of Study and Strenuous Physical Training devised for transforming Ambitious Individuals into Dedicated Circus Troupers and of qualification in every other respect, as demanded for graduation, is awarded this

DIPLOMA

and is entitled to all the honors and highest privileges thereunto appertaining, as well as to the innumerable inconveniences, indignities and splendid joys attending a First-of-May participant in the honorable and ancient Brotherhood of Clowning.

In witness thereof, this document has been duly signed and issued by The Greatest Show On Earth upon recommendation of the Dean and Faculty and presented this, the twentieth day of November, anno Domini, one thousand nine hundred and seventy-two.



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

Kathy "Noodles" Gurak
18 Park Avenue
Garfield, NJ 07026

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

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

Judy "Dearheart" Quest
715 North 36th Street
Omaha, NE 68131-1906

Good Cheer Chairperson:

Crissy "Miz Daisy" Melnitzke
crissy@mizdaisyentertainment.com
863-221-4183



CREDIT: ISTOCK

By Christina Malycha McGlynn

After being isolated due to the pandemic and not being able to perform, it is wonderful being out and about creating smiles again. It feels a little weird, but I am adjusting nicely. I am sure that many can relate to feeling alive again. Our characters are back to work and it is very refreshing.

Going forward, we must be mindful to maintain the space that the public is comfortable with during performances. Now more than ever we never want to invade anyone's comfort zone. Children have become very isolated during the pandemic, and we must meet them at *their* comfort level of distance and interaction. For our safety, we too must keep our distance and keep safe.

Many children are seeing clowns in person for the very first time. That's exciting not only for them, but also for us. I feel honored that the first time they see a clown, they see me. For that reason, I must be at my most colorful and joyous. It can be overwhelming to see a clown for the first time, so let us be thoughtful and maintain appropriate space and interaction. Allow the children to come to us. Trust me: you will get smiles as you parade your colorful character. Be your amazing clown self!



As a clown, I am always learning. That's why I came up with the acronym LEAP. It stands for

Listen, Engage, Ask, and be Present.

Listening to the child or adult is a gift. After all, God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason. Allow the child or adult to talk. Let them share with you whatever creative imagination releases out of their sweet faces. When people see clowns, even adults, they remember themselves, their true innocent childlike self. Give them their time to light up and share. Just being there, we allow them to tear their walls down and allow them to be playful again. They may tell you about the first time they saw a clown or a time when they saw one perform at a circus. Either way, it brings forth joy to them. Allow them to experience it and know that by you standing there listening to them, you are allowing these happy memories to be experienced again.

Engage with the audience, maybe by creating a balloon in front of them. It is a huge wow to see a clown make something so special, like a flower or a dog, out of a simple balloon. Play peek-a-boo, as they may be unsure or need to be shown that you can see them. They feel important—like, "Wow, the clown wants to play with me!" To feel important, right? It is about the experience we as clowns give to others, isn't it? If there is music, maybe engage some to dance along with you or start a wave in the crowd. This helps when doing some line control as they wait to receive a balloon or get their faces painted. I was at a local grocery store during the pandemic and dressed as MaiZie the Clown. People were waiting outside in line as they only let a few people in the store at a time. You could feel the tension in the air; the general mood made a negative shift. I was dressed as MaiZie as I was coming back from participating at a window visit at a nursing home. I began doing the wave and singing. Engaging with them, even at a distance, started to make people laugh and feel less tense. Their mood began to shift and the employees thanked me for the interaction. They

kept asking if the store hired MaiZie to perform. I said that I was simply there to shop. It made time fly and kept people in a good mood. Keep in mind you won't win everyone over, but that's okay. Do your best.

Ask questions to let people know that you care. "How old are you?" Then, you can reply with something silly, like you're five years old, too. How about asking them if they have pets? If they say dog, you can begin the process of making them a dog balloon animal. Ask, "What's your favorite color?" and create a flower in the same color. Don't get too inquisitive, as we do not want to be intrusive. It's about them, so keep the focus. Asking questions will help you learn about them, which in turn will also help you entertain them. Furthermore, asking questions gives you the ability to personalize your act for the audience. When you are clowning, it is like you are always performing on stage, no matter where you are—even in line at a grocery

store. You may also consider carrying props. One of my clown friends keeps a small mirror in her pocket and asks her audience, "Do you want to see someone special?" and then pulls out the mirror to show them their own face. It's appropriate for all ages, even our senior friends. The person will walk away thinking, "Wow, that clown was so personable and thoughtful." It will raise their vibration towards joy and hopefully carry it forward, making them feel special and their day lighter.

Being Present with someone is always well-received. To look at a person and see them is a wonderful experience for the person on the receiving end. Some people are hard of hearing, and looking at them gives them the opportunity to be heard or communicate by lip-reading. You may be overworked, working hard twisting balloons, and the children and adults are calling out, "Me next!" Please remember to focus on the one person in front of you and give them personal

attention. I know it is easy to get distracted; we are clowns after all. Redirect yourself to the present and remember to breathe. You are one person and you're doing the best job that you can. You're a clown! Focus on who is in front of you at that very moment and soon, you will see the next child or adult. They will be happy that you are present with them during the short time they have with you. It is a memorable experience, and you make a difference by being present. Give yourself—and your audience—the gift of being present, and all will be grateful.

Keep smiling and bring the world your colorful self. Remember to LEAP into clowning and the world will smile.

Christina Malycha McGlynn serves as the President of Grease Paint Alley Clowns, Inc. in Rochester, New York and may be reached at (585)230-0363 or maizietheclown@gmail.com. TNC



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Change the World!

By Matty “McFun” Spraggins

For me, it started about five years ago during the clown scare. Then, during the pandemic shutdown, I watched in sadness as it enveloped nearly all of us.

What is “it”, you ask? I’m speaking about ignoring the obvious. Wanting something, but doing nothing to get it. Knowing that something can change lives but choosing to not make a change.

Clown friends, it’s now time to make that change. For you. For me. For the world. We all have the power to change the world. We carry this power with us every day and most of us use it to watch others waste its potential. You, my clown friend, have the potential to change the world by just using that phone you carry with you everywhere!

During the clown scare I heard so many clowns complain that “real” clowns were getting a bad rap because of the scary clowns who were, at the time, getting air time and plenty of social media coverage. Yet I didn’t see any of the “real” clowns trying to counter or offset the scary clowns by posting their own clown videos on social media. The scary clowns posted videos; we did not. They got negative attention and scared people. Meanwhile, we did nothing. We used the same social media platforms just to complain about it. The fact is, the more new stuff you post to social media, the fewer old posts you’ll see. I saw no new posts by “real” clowns.

It broke my heart recently when I heard several clowns say, “I’m looking forward to the lockdowns being lifted so I can clown again.” Whaaaaaa?!? You never had to stop! During the pandemic I bought, and used, more clown supplies than I ever had before. I learned more about my clown character—and actually clowned—more than ever.

How?

I made videos. I made videos of myself with my phone. I just put my phone on a tripod, pushed “record” and did something. Then I uploaded the videos to Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram for the world to see. That’s it. I pushed record and did something. And had fun doing it. It was easy. No skill involved. Just a phone, an app, and a button.

We all have a phone with a camera and video app.

We all love clowning.

We all want to bring a smile and joy to others.

Then do it. Just do it. Put on your makeup, get your phone, and take a pie or make a short video – thirty seconds to two minutes - telling a joke, playing with your puppet, doing a magic trick, making a silly face, or just being yourself. Please do something: for me, for others, for yourself. Let’s all do something to bring joy to the world. It’s okay if it’s not perfect. It’s okay that you don’t know how to edit it. Who cares? We don’t care. We just want to see your clown make us smile.

You hold the power in your hands to change the world. Imagine waking up every day and seeing Facebook flooded with clown posts that just make you, and the rest of the world, smile. I can’t wait to see it. But it can’t happen if you don’t take that first pie or video. Trust me. It’s fun! Just do it. Change the world.

P.S. This shouldn’t be about how many likes you get. It’s about being genuine, growing as a clown, and making someone smile. Even if it’s just 1 person (and that person is you). **TNC**

Reach Matty Spraggins by email at magicmattyfun@gmail.com.

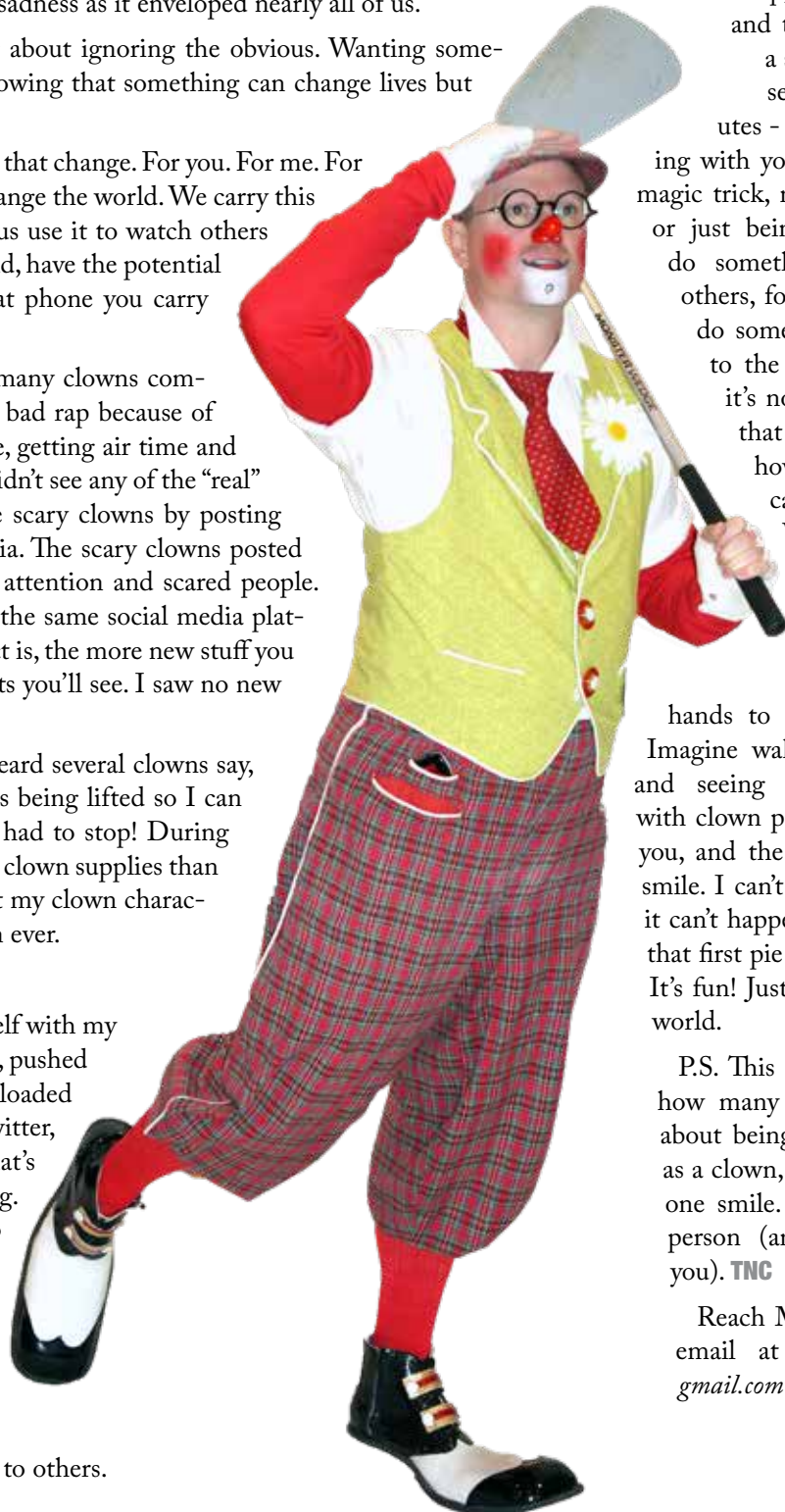


PHOTO BY MERILYN BARRETT

Supply Chain Issues in the Clown World

By Tricia “Pricilla Mooseburger” Manuel

Does the current supply chain shortage impact clowns?

Sadly, yes. It comes down to the little things, like suspender clips manufactured in China. Until they resolve the shipment delays for suspender clips, you can expect a shortage of suspenders in your favorite colors.

Those same issues extend to the manufacturing and shipment of makeup, too. Makeup companies suffered under COVID-19 shutdowns. They cut back on products by eliminating colors and products that were not top sellers. Now, you may not be able to find your favorite base colors. It doesn't help that Mehron has discontinued their ProFace makeup line. You can, however, still get NoSweat under its new name Skin Prep Pro.

Balloons? As soon as possible before you need them, check with your favorite vendor to see how soon they can ship.

Wigs come from China, too. Many colors have been out of stock for over a year. If you shop around and get lucky, you may be able to find a dealer who still has one sitting on the shelf. Otherwise, you will need a Plan B because the wig shortage is not going to turn around any time soon. Plan on delays in shipping for your clown supplies; give it an extra week even for in stock items.

Just pick up the phone and ask your supplier about costume and shoe availability. At Mooseburger's, we're getting our custom costume production back up to speed but it may take an additional week or two for some items to arrive. We still have a supply of popular items in stock for immediate shipment.

Please call during regular business hours or leave a message. This goes for all vendors. We have websites to service our customers, but to be honest we'd rather talk to you directly. That way, we can ensure great service and notify you about any delays or specials we might have! Phone calls also make it easier for us to answer your questions about what items you can use to replace a discontinued or out of stock item.



Your small vendors are the life blood of the clown industry. We are here on a daily basis to answer your questions about products, because we use them too! COVID-19 restrictions, and the resulting supply chain shortages, have hit us hard. But we are doing our best to service you and keep you clowning around. You can give us a hand by buying from us—and not buying from Amazon.

Look in the magazine and support your vendors who support your organization! We truly care about our fellow clowns and want to help you do what you do at your very best: making people smile and cheering up a weary world. You are needed now more than ever! **TNC**

Tricia Manuel is the unmistakable Pricilla Mooseburger. She is the owner of Pricilla Mooseburger Originals and Mooseburger Clown Arts Camp, and the founder of The Red Nose Readers. 320-963-6277 www.mooseburger.com www.rednosereader.org

WHAT KIND OF AUDIENCE ARE YOU?

How you act as an audience member says a lot about your professionalism and respect for the art of clowning, other performers, other audience members, and yourself.



By Mike Bednarek

Performing artists like clowns take in a lot of shows—at least the good ones do, the ones who consider themselves a work-in-progress and are students of the art, always practicing, working and challenging and pushing themselves to improve. They're the ones who want to be entertained, to laugh, to momentarily escape everyday life, to learn from observing other performers (including those in other performing arts fields besides the clown arts), to grow from being part of an audience and watching what works, what engages, what amuses and entertains, what fascinates, what would make them a better clown—and, on the flip side, what doesn't.

An incident at a recent clown convention made me stop and think about how audiences work. Why do they behave the way they do? What challenges does the performer face in connecting with them? What can performers learn from the audience while performing? What can performers learn from an audience when not on stage themselves? How should the performer-in-the-audience act?

It made me realize that there is a constant need to train audiences how to be a good audience, as well as train performers how to create a good audience. This is especially true with young audiences who have had little to no prior live audience experience and with post-pandemic audiences who may have forgotten how to be an audience (and 'post-pandemic' may be a premature declaration).

I'll talk about that incident in a moment. First, consider some of the different kinds of audiences you might encounter as a clown performing artist. Keep in mind that a typical audience is made up of people of different ages, backgrounds, perspectives, motivations, and expectations. You may find many or all of these types in an audience for whom you're performing or in which you're an audience member.

PASSIVE AUDIENCE

This audience gathers together to watch a performance in which they are not necessarily interested, perhaps required to sit together as an audience. The performer must pique curiosity and spark group excitement.

NEUTRAL AUDIENCE

This audience has no idea what to expect and is possibly unfamiliar with this type of live performance or show, but they're open to the experience. They have no strong feelings positive or negative going into the event. A neutral audience might not even know how to be an audience for a live performance! The performer has the power to engage, entertain, challenge, and produce feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction. Or not. The first step is to let the audience know that they matter.

SPECTATOR AUDIENCE

This audience comes to watch a performance but not actively engage or participate. They are seated on the other side of the "fourth wall." You might have this type of audience at an open-air festival. The performer is challenged to engage them and give them opportunities to interact.

ACTIVE AUDIENCE

This audience actively engages with live performances, wants to participate, and enjoys active experiences. They want to watch, listen, feel, think, wonder, react, and interact, and be part of an audience that does the same. The performer knows that different audience members will want to experience the event in different ways.

FRIENDLY AUDIENCE/FANS

This audience happily chooses to attend the performance. They support the performer, might be already familiar with their work, are on their side, and want them to succeed. The performer should reinforce and affirm their enthusiasm and trust and interest.

FUN LOVING/GOOD TIME AUDIENCE

This audience expects to be entertained, ready to engage with humor and an interesting performance, but might be easily demotivated and distracted. The performer needs to hook them early and show them a good time.

DISTRACTED AUDIENCE

A distracted audience isn't completely focused on the performance, either because of a busy physical environment or because of outside issues and circumstances that may be preoccupying their state of mind. The performer must grab their attention and keep them focused and engaged in a shared audience experience.

EXPERT AUDIENCE

This audience is very knowledgeable and perhaps accomplished practitioners of clowning themselves. They are interested in the fine points and mastery of the art. There's not much they haven't seen before, but they still hope to learn

or experience something new. Experts have a high concentration level because of their interests and experiences, so the performer must wow them.

SPY AUDIENCE

The Spy attends a performance to gather observations for their own use or to report back to a group. The Spy might be supportive or neutral, perhaps observing the performer before hiring for a future gig. Or the Spy might be keeping track of the competition and looking to glean new material or ideas for their own performances. The challenge for the performer is to get the Spy to relax and have an emotional connection to the performance, rather than just analytical and judgmental.

VIP AUDIENCE

The VIP audience wants more than just a unique experience. They want something exclusive that they would not be able to find anywhere else. A VIP may also be a Spy, eager to share information about the performance and performer. The performer's challenge is to satisfy the VIP with unique stuff that's "worth the price of admission."

CRITICAL/SKEPTICAL AUDIENCE

The critic looks for strong points and exhilarating moments, as well as faults and areas needing improvement. A skeptic open-mindedly seeks the honest truth and will cut through the baloney like room temperature butter. The performer needs to deliver a great performance, feel good about it, be honest about it, and then be open to a constructive critique from a trusted, knowledgeable source.

HOSTILE AUDIENCE

A hostile audience can think of any number of other places they'd rather be than at this performance. They don't like this type of live performance, this performer, or not being on the stage themselves. They might be prone to texting, mumbling out loud about being there, carrying on side conversations, showing dissatisfaction with non-verbal posture or behavior, or acting out to get

attention or sabotage the performance. The performer will have to win them over, change their minds, surprise them, or at least neutralize their negative energy.

Do you recognize or have you had experience with any of these kinds of audiences? How did you react and respond at the time? What did you learn about that audience and your performance that was useful down the road?

Audiences are rarely one single type and are most often mixed. The challenge to us as performing artists is to connect with and engage them all. If we want good audiences, we can begin by expecting and modeling good audience behavior.

Now, go back through these audience nutshells and think about recent performances in which YOU were an audience member. Do you recall observing any of these behaviors in those audiences? What kind of an audience were YOU at those performances?

One recent negative experience in an audience sticks out in my mind, and was in fact the motivation for researching and writing this piece. It's the incident I referenced at the outset.

At a recent clown convention, everyone had gathered with much anticipation for the headliner's evening performance. The general public had been invited, and the back section of the audience was full of kids, families, and folks buzzing with excitement to be there.

Part way through the headliner's performance, someone behind me started talking out loud. On purpose. It was startling. Not heckling the clown on stage, but still attention seeking, rude, and disruptive. Why was he doing that? I turned around to try to make eye contact, but couldn't. Then someone in front of him started doing the same. What the heck! I couldn't really understand what was being said, but I hoped that the audible distraction wasn't making its way up to the stage. It came across as disrespectful to the performer, to the audience members around the folks acting out, and to the performing art of clowning. Thankfully, it ceased.

The worst part about it? It was directly in front of the general public section of

the audience full of children and families. Sadly, it was unprofessional behavior and poor role modeling from clowns who should be the most supportive and engaged of any audience member.

The "Eight Clown Commandments" espoused by Clowns of America International includes this:

"I will conduct myself as a gentleman/lady, never interfering with other acts, events, spectators, or individuals."

Seems that this ethic should apply both to the times we're clowning and sharing the stage or the venue with other performers, and also to those times we're not in clown and in the audience for a live performance. If we want to call ourselves performing artists and professional clowns, a code of ethics based on respect should be our guide:

RESPECT THE ART.

RESPECT THE AUDIENCE.

RESPECT OTHER

PERFORMERS.

RESPECT YOURSELF.

Taking that to heart, here are a few things that performing artists can do as audience members:

1. Be on-time and ready.
2. Turn the distractions off (mental and audiovisual).
3. Show your engagement by non-verbal cues.
4. Be observant and take notes.
5. Be inquisitive and ask yourself good, reflective questions.
6. Make the connections to your own performances, character, and style.
7. Model good audience behavior.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T. That's what it's all about, baby. **TNC**

Mike Bednarek is medical clown Dr. Fun E. Bone, Chief of Stupidity at Salem Health Hospital (Salem, Oregon). He started clowning in 1980. In his spare time, he squeezes the concertina, yogis, cycles without falling (much), and gets taken for long walks by his dogs and wife. You may reach him by email at mbednarek@comcast.net.

25 Years go

By Regina “Cha Cha” Wollrabe

Meet Susan “Fruit” Oberg from Massachusetts, the first recipient of MCOAI’s Excellence in Clowning Award, featured on the cover of the May/June 1997 issue of *The New Calliope*. The magazine is packed with fun and useful information. Here are some highlights.

On page four there’s a story about a Jr. Joey named Lindsey “Luney Tuney” Noel, fourteen years old, who started clowning because of her grandma. Noel got hooked by the wonderful feeling of making others smile.

Barbara “Nuzzles” Waters-Riddle shares a story about twenty-one First of Mays, in Florida, who succeeded at putting on a reader’s program in libraries. The reader’s program was modeled after the one that Keith “Toby” Stokes designed.

An article titled, “Small Can Certainly Be Smooth,” by Karen “Peppermint” Rienholt is the sixth in her series of birthday party articles. She discusses how you can make smaller parties more successful by including silly antics, magic tricks, games, balloons, and face-painting.

Margaret “Maggie” Clauder from Texas writes, “Attitude is everything.” This story made me cry. She shares how, after breaking her wrist, she had to change her attitude and try doing things differently. Maggie explains how she continued to build her clown skills despite the fact that her wrist injury made it feel impossible.

David “Mr. Rainbow” Bartlett wrote “The Big Question” and asks us to consider how we *really* think about clowns, because that guides us in what we do and how we do it. He really makes you think about things.

Dan “Dano” Lake wrote the “Alley Update” explaining new and different ways for clown alleys to run their meetings, based off reports he received from various alleys.

COAI Competition Chairman Leo Desilets has an article explaining how to start a new alley. He writes at length about the necessary officer roles that keep an alley running and viable.

President Brenda “Flower” Marshall discusses the upcoming August clown week, and shares tips on how to take care of yourself while clowning in the hot summer months.

Steven “Mr. Pickle” Bender from Ickle Pickle products writes in “Storyline Magic” some ideas for restaurant work using tableside magic.

Dr. Bugg shares a fun poem titled “Clowning” by Greg Lutz of Texas.

Mike “Buster” Bednarek wrote the article that caught my attention the most: “Philosophy for Clown Competition.” This is a must-read for those of you who think competitions could benefit from change. I have personally experienced this type of



competition in the Northwest, and it works. Mike proposes a new idea for competitions that would award all clowns who reached a certain level of criteria. Competing against ourselves gives us opportunity to grow, and eliminates competing against each other for first, second, and third place. More clowns would be awarded according to their abilities. They’d receive critiques from coaches, helping them to grow and improve. The board was enthusiastically in favor, but for some reason it never became a part of our competitions at the COAI level. I encourage members to look at the concept that Mike proposed twenty-five years ago.

A rich history of ideas and knowledge has been passed on to us. It’s at our fingertips, and can all be found in the Vault on our website. Being a COAI member is truly a great value when you see everything that *The New Calliope* has given to us over time. Thank you to those who continue to passionately pass on the art of clowning to the next generations.

If you would like to help our current and future COAI members become even better entertainers and clowns, consider writing and submitting an article to *The New Calliope*. Sharing your thoughts can encourage our Joeys and keep the world a happier place. **TNC**



WHAT MAKES A CLOWN?

By Alene Kraus

What makes a clown, you may ask?
Colored hair,
A costume bright,
And a funny red nose
Sure to delight.

What makes a clown, you may ask?
I suspect it's much more than that.

A warm smile,
A laugh that's shared,
A spirit lifted to make someone glad.
It's a gift of one's heart;
This is what transforms a frown.

What makes a clown, you may ask?
It is all of this and nothing less.



PHOTOS OF ALENE KRAUS BY REGINA "CHA CHA" WOLLRABE.

JUNIOR JOEYS

Beginning Unicycling Pin



By Regina “Cha Cha” Wollrabe,
Junior Joeys Director

“Look, Mom, no hands!” That’s what I used to say when I rode my bike as a child. I rode my bicycle without holding onto the handle bars for years before I finally tried a unicycle. It was 2009 at Clown Camp in Arthur Peddler’s class who was at the time in his seventies. I knew at that point that I was going to get my own sons on a unicycle. It was so much fun for me, and I just knew it would be a skill

they would never regret having. We started getting unicycles of all sizes. Andre was six years old, and after a month he was riding all over the place. He even entered his school talent show with his unicycle. All of my boys learned how to ride a unicycle, and my oldest son, Rudy, used his skills in the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus just a few years later.

The Pin Criteria is a tool to inspire you to get started riding a unicycle while remembering to be safe at all times. Of course, you will need a unicycle. I prefer having a new one, but often we had unicycles donated to us. If you get a used unicycle, look for cracks and loose parts, and make sure your tires are pumped up to the recommended air pressure. When you measure a unicycle for your height you want the seat to be at the level of your bellybutton. Tires should be firm.

Getting started is tricky, but it’s not too difficult when you are young. When I learned in Arthur Peddler’s class, he had two people hold a broomstick while I held the stick with both hands and found my balance. They followed me as I slowly turned my pedals. I later learned to keep my balance by touching a fence in my yard. Eventually I

was able to ride and balance on my own. When my kids saw that Mom could do it, they had to show me they could learn even faster, and I couldn’t be prouder.

There are many YouTube videos that give tips in riding a unicycle. One of the first skills that you should try to master after you find your balance is self mounting and idling. Until then you will need the help of your parents or a friend to help you get started.

Safety: Remember to always wear a helmet. Wearing knee and elbow pads is also a good idea. Try holding your seat when you jump off so your unicycle isn’t always crashing on the ground. Make sure your seat is adjusted and tires are properly inflated. Stay away from cars and don’t ride in the street. When you get really good, maybe you’ll be able to juggle as you’re riding! This is one of my goals I really hope to accomplish one day, too.

Bump a nose! **TNC**





BEGINNING SKILLS IN UNICYCLING

Unicycling is a very fun skill to have as a clown. It will take a little time, but you will never regret learning a skill like this one. Unicycles are great in parades or strolling events. The goal of unicycling is to learn how to balance—and have fun! Practice makes perfect. Ride your unicycle a little each day. You'll be riding with confidence before you know it. Don't give up. You can do it!

- Purchase or find a unicycle that is made for your size.
- Make sure all parts on the unicycle are adjusted correctly.
- Make sure tire is inflated to the recommended pressure.
- Wear a helmet, knee and elbow pads when riding your unicycle.
- Use a wall or get help from two people holding a broom stick.
- Sit up straight, look forward, and find your balance.
- Learn to idle.
- Learn to mount the unicycle without assistance.
- Ride without stopping for 30 seconds.
- Learn to ride in a circle.
- Parent/Jr. Joey Leader Signature: _____

Date: _____

MY COAI CONVENTION EXPERIENCE

By Bonnie Corcia

As one of the recipients of the 2022 scholarship, I want to thank COAI for the opportunity to fill my creative cup again. The past couple of years have been very difficult for many of us. With the additional responsibility of family caregiving I had lost my creative spirit. It was an emotional journey to get to the point where I wanted to go to the convention; I was hesitant to attend until days before. I am so grateful to my friend who encouraged me to attend and apply for the scholarship. Through this experience I was reinfused with joy and laughter. I was able to spend time with people who are fun and full of zest for life, make new friends, and visit with old friends, too. We are so blessed to spend time with like-minded people. During my time with all of you, I allowed myself to just sit and be fulfilled by the wonderful classes, the fellowship of healing conversations, and the time spent with other creative souls. At one point I had a conversation with someone who I've known for a very long time. I told him, "I feel lost and out of place." He said, "Your clown is still in you. Just give her time to heal—we still see her." Thank you!

When I returned home after my time of rest, I woke up one morning with a new show running through my head—new music, a new puppet to create, new stories to tell, and magic to perform. What a joy it was to be able to create again.

I am so very grateful for the time I had in Atlanta with you all. Thank you for the gift of the scholarship. I am forever grateful to this organization for the opportunity to attend the 2022 COAI Convention. **TNC**



LESSONS

By Skip Way

TTrue story: I was ten years old when I rode with my parents to the Toledo Zoo. I was excited about meeting one of my television idols live and in person. Clutching the performer's studio photo in one hand and a pen in the other, I envisioned an epic day!

When we arrived, a zoo employee pointed to the gate through which this giant of a man would walk. I found an old stump next to the gate and began my patient vigil. After a mere eternity, the gate creaked open and my khaki-clad hero strode confidently though. I timidly approached him with photo and pen. He frowned down at me as he continued walking and said, "You can buy a signed pic after the show, kid."

Fast forward one year. Another television kidshow star was appearing live at our local amusement park. I'd learned a painful lesson about expecting kindness from these people, but a friend and I decided to try and get a glimpse of him at the ballroom's stage door. After a second eternity, a sharp black limousine pulled up and out stepped The Man himself. He noticed us as he walked towards the stage door and, without hesitation, he smiled, waved, and changed course.

This gentle, caring man sat down on the curb and chatted with us until an aide gently tapped on his shoulder. He took a pair of front row tickets from his aide and handed them to us along with his brightest smile. He made us feel as though we were the most important people in his life for those few moments. To this day, I believe that we were.

Sixty years have passed, and I can still recall the crushing pain and euphoria of those two childhood events. Like the man who first set me on this wonderful entertainment career path, each child I meet is the most important person in my life at that moment. Maybe, sixty years from now, one of these children may write, "This gentle caring man sat down on the curb..."

What will they write about you? **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.

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Gift a COAI membership today!

MY FAVORITE MAGIC

By Kent Sheets

ARTWORK BY TONY DUNN

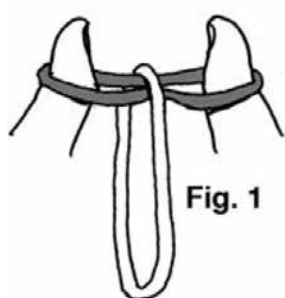


Fig. 1

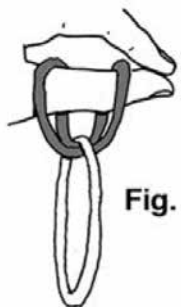


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

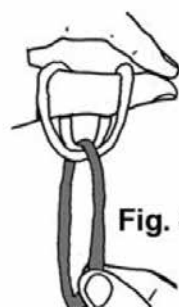


Fig. 4

Do you have a favorite magic trick? I have several – especially easy, self-working, inexpensive magic tricks.

That's why I enjoy teaching my Easy Magic class, where I can share those same easy, self-working, and inexpensive magic tricks with anyone who wants to learn. I have taught this class over the years at several conventions, including Southeast Clown Association (SECA), World Clown Association, and Clowns of America International.

I want to share with you my all-time favorite magic trick. I learned it over a decade ago during a S.E.C.A. convention class. It is one of the most effortless (and low-cost) tricks you'll ever find. It is so easy, in fact, that I have seen six and seven year old children learn and perform it after watching me perform it just a few times. I am surprised that it is seldom seen at conventions or mentioned on the Internet. (There are, however, available commercial versions of the trick's same concept using colored plastic chains.)

The name of the trick is Loopy Loop. It uses two different colored cloth loops; I use potholder loops. When performing, I like to ask if anyone knows what these loops are and where to get them. Usually someone knows that they are potholder loops. That's when I ask, "Did you know that little old ladies gave up their panty hose so we could have these?"

Recently I was surprised to find pictures of this trick on the cover *Easy-to-Do Magic Tricks for Children*. Despite performing Loopy Loop for years, I was unaware of this book—which happens to be by one of my favorite authors, Karl Fulves. He has written many books on the subject of easy magic. I highly recommend checking out his work.

The Trick: Colored loops (I use the bright nylon ones) change places with each other again and again. Then one loop is pulled off (threw) the thumb. The nice thing about this trick is that the loops can be given to a child of any age to put on their wrist.

Method: Slide the light loop onto the dark (or different color) loop. Take the dark loop and loop it onto each thumb (**Fig. 1**). Put thumbs end to end, and slide dark loop onto one thumb (**Fig. 2**). Ask a volunteer if they know up versus down. Then ask if they know top versus bottom, and follow up by asking them if they know which color loop is on the top? As they answer, pull the side of the dark loop down (**Fig. 3**). The loops will change places. Next, ask the volunteer which color loop is now on top. As they answer, pull the side of the loop on the thumb. You can do this as often as you like. The loops will change places each time you pull the top loop.

For the final magical effect, take the bottom (hanging) loop and put it on the end of the thumb. Take your fingers and pull the other loop off of the thumb. Make sure you use the loop hanging off your thumb that is closest to your wrist.

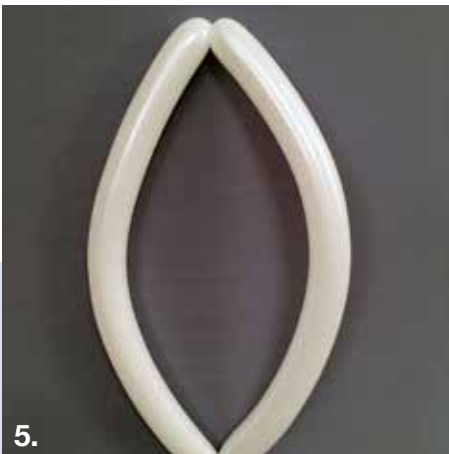
If you have any trouble with this trick, I always tell people: just ask a five year old. **TNC**

Kent Sheets has served on the COAI Board of Directors as Southeast Regional Vice President and Director of Education. He has served as a COAI Ambassador for many years and on the Southeast Clown Association board as President, President Elect, Vice President, Newsletter Editor, and Convention Chair. A Life Member of COAI and SECA, Kent has received the COAI Individual CHARLIE Award twice. He is also a recipient of the COAI Excellence in Clowning Award. Reach Kent at sheetskent@aol.com.



Swan

By Patricia "Pockets" Bunnell



1. Inflate a white 260, leaving a 2-inch tip. Make three, 3-inch bubbles. Twist the second and third together. Pull the first bubble over the other two and roll the knot through the joint. This will give you a three-bubble cluster. Make a small pinch twist. Set aside.
2. Inflate a white 360 and make two 6-inch bubbles. Twist together and then make a pinch

- twist. Deflate, tie off, and discard the remaining balloon.
3. Now using the balloon with the head cluster on it, make a 12-inch neck. Twist in at the pinch-twist on the 360. Make a loop under the neck for the handle. With the remaining balloon twist a 6-inch bubble a loop and leave a round bubble at the end.
4. Twist the loop in at the back of the 360 for a tail. Give it a slight bend upward.

5. Inflate a white 260 leaving about one-half inch. Tie tip to tail and form two bubbles to make its wings.
6. Insert the wings under the pinch-twist and at the back of the tail. Shape. Set aside.
7. Using the tip of a black 260 make a 3-inch beak followed by a pinch-twist. Discard the remaining balloon. Twist in at the front of the head cluster. Add artwork.

Patricia "Pockets" Bunnell is an award-winning balloon artist from the Portland, Oregon, area. You may reach her by e-mail at oddballoon@gmail.com.





Edward “Ted” Dowling

Edward “Ted” Dowling, 75, received his call to Heaven’s Center Ring on March 11, 2022. For many years, “Pea Pa” was a tramp/hobo clown who collected numerous awards and was a respected leader in the clowning arts. Ted proudly maintained several fraternal memberships as a member of the Aleppo Shriners, the Aleppo clown unit, and the International Shrine Clown Association. He also served on the board of the Northeast Clown Institute. To say that he was dedicated to the Institute would be an understatement. He was one of the members who was its heart and soul. Over the years of his involvement, he served in many capacities, including Treasurer and President. He actively engaged every board member in his two goals – to make the Institute the best it could be and make sure that every participant had access to and enjoyed the best possible educational experience the Institute had to offer. Pea Pa cultivated close contacts with local clown arts groups, COAI, Clowns Canada, and WCA in a continuing effort to develop and support clown art training.

In his other life, Ted was a devoted family man. He was retired, enjoyed traveling, and was active in his community of Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, and the surrounding area. He was a volunteer who enjoyed supporting youth programs. We are sure that when he entered Heaven’s Center Ring, he was at ease in the spotlight. When the Ring Master completed Pea Pa’s introduction, the audience gave him a standing ovation and thunderous applause. He deserved it all. **TNC**

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WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

By Beth "Pickles" Cedarholm



it. We would do forty-minute shows, and as we went from show to show, I would be in the back-seat reloading the magic.

One of our big tricks used six large silks. I would load them into a large change bag. One thing I had learned from Duane Laffin, "The Master of Silk Magic," was, when working with silks in a change bag, hang them with velcro dots so you will know which one to pull out.

We were behind time, and it was a school show. We pulled up to the school, and I thought I had everything ready. We started the show. I pulled out the change bag, looked down, and all the silks were sitting in the bottom of the bag! Of course, I pulled out the last silk first.

And the blow off? Nobody knew we were tap dancing.

Tim Laynor, Clown

Several years ago, I was face painting at a New Year's Eve event with my alley, Kolonial Klowns, Alley 357. We had one line, and the painter who was free would call out, "Next."

One father and daughter kept allowing people to get in line ahead of them. When my wife (and fellow alley member), who was sitting across the table from me, said, "Next," the father shook his head and he pointed at me. They clearly wanted *me* to be their face-painter. When I finally said, "Next," a young lady came running to the table and bounced into the seat in front of me. She excitedly said, "Do you remember me? You painted me last year!" I didn't, but I said, "Yes, I do." Then the young lady said, "Do you remember what you painted?" Again, I



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

Lee Andrews, Clown

While on tour my first season as advance clown with the Cole Bros. Circus, one of my jobs was to lead tours for visiting school children and their families. We wouldn't do these often, but on occasion a group of children and adults would arrive around nine-thirty in the morning, take a tour with me, and watch the circus tent rise in the air. It truly was a fun moment to watch, as most people have no clue the amount of work it takes to bring a circus to life.



me that there was a "real-looking tiger puppet" resting on some bleachers under the big top. As I turned around, I saw the biggest, most majestic tiger resting a mere seventy feet from us.

We were able to inform the tiger trainer about where her beautiful animal was and she quickly came into the big top. The trainer leashed the tiger and proceeded to walk it by us as if the tiger were a puppy dog.

I knew how dangerous these beautiful animals were, but I didn't quite realize the respect and love that they have for the trainers until that moment. That tiger wasn't a threat, but instead was just resting in its place of comfort, the big top.

A close call for sure, one that those kids—and this clown—will never forget.

Bob Gretton, Clown

When my wife, Teresa, and I were the advance clowns for the Cole Bros. Circus, we would do as many as five comedy magic shows every day. The marketing director would drive us from location to location: schools, libraries, day-cares, zoos—you name





didn't remember, but I said, "How could I forget?" Then she said, "I want that again."

By now, my wife is looking at me, laughing, and wondering how I was going to dig myself out of this hole. She knows how bad I am at remembering names and faces.

I said the only thing that came to mind, "Let's do something different this time." After the young lady agreed, I painted a full-face butterfly and hoped it wasn't what I had painted the year prior. When I showed her the design in the mirror, she giggled and said, "I love it even more than last year's!"

This experience taught me a valuable lesson: be truthful, even if you must apologize for not remembering something. **TNC**

Do you want to share a tale of woe, lesson learned, or "What could possibly go wrong?" story? Send it to Beth "Pickles" Cedarholm at clownpickles@gmail.com. All entries are subject to editing for clarity and length.

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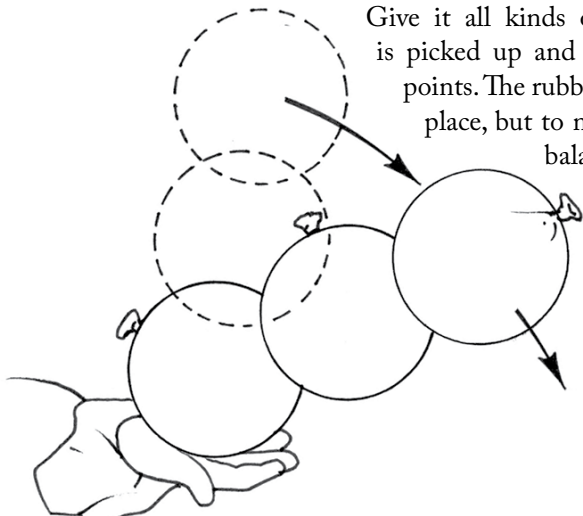
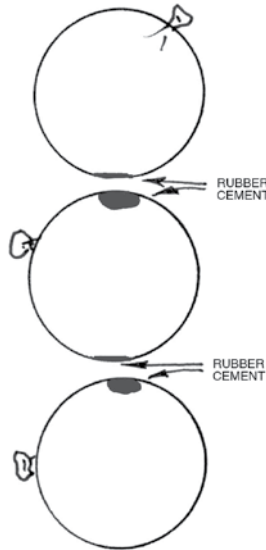
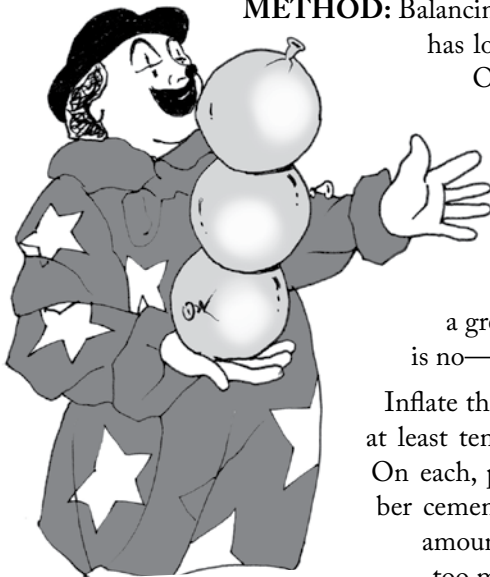
EFFECT: Three balloons are balanced on top of each other to form a tower. The tower is tipped forward to get a laugh.

METHOD: Balancing three round objects on top of one another has long been one of the hardest of juggling feats. Only a few in the history of juggling have accomplished this, and they did it with a little unknown aid. You may have seen me as Rebo the Clown do the balloon balance on the *Allakazam* show and wondered if I had become a great juggler. The answer is no—I used a lot of help!

Inflate three balloons which are at least ten inches in diameter. On each, put a touch of rubber cement. Use only a small amount of cement because too much will give the trick away. Allow the rubber cement to dry, and you are ready to balance the balloons. The cement should be put on all three balloons, but one balloon should have the cement in two places, on opposite sides of the balloon.

Give it all kinds of showmanship as each balloon is picked up and placed together at the cemented points. The rubber cement will hold the balloons in place, but to make it look good, you must really balance them.

There can be two finishes to this effect. As a comedy effect, you can allow the balloons to fall forward and expose the fact that they are one unit. You can also produce a dove from the tower with a *bang!* TNC



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By Fred "Ozzie" Baisch

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