

THE NEW CALLIÖPE

For Members of Clowns of America International

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**BARBARA
"SPARKY" BIRD**
Lifetime Achievement Award

Your COAI Officers

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BARBARA "SPARKY" BIRD

Lifetime Achievement Award

By Rose Cardenas

When Barbara Bird signed up for clown school at the Schenectady County Community College twenty-six years ago at the suggestion of a friend, she had no idea where it would take her, but she knew that she wanted to use it to enhance the lives of others. She was a nurse at the time, providing health care to many. Clown school opened up a whole new life for her, as she says, "I put a face on, I change, and I become a new person. It's like a mini vacation every time." Barbara started clowning part time as she continued her career, but it wasn't long before she put her health care career aside and took up humor therapy full time.

Motivations for clowning vary greatly, but Barbara has always been very focused on bringing fun to those who need some joy in their lives, especially those in hospitals and other health care facilities. Most of her activities are on a volunteer basis as part of COAI, international goodwill tours, her local Alley, Clowns on Rounds, Caring Clowns, and the Red Nose Response. Though her focus has been clear from the beginning, she says, "Clown life has been an evolution, constantly changing."

Barbara has been an active member of COAI for many years. She founded the Electric City Clown Alley (ECCA), Alley #285, with Bill Hart, one of her teachers from clown school, and others. She has served in many positions in the Alley and was the co-chairman of the COAI Convention in 1999 and 2002. In addition, she has served as a lecturer, judge, and the mentor for several of the COAI Conventions. Barbara has written several articles for *The New Calliope* and enjoyed nominating others for Clown of the Year, the Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Ring of Honor.

She has competed and placed in the top three or top ten in a wide variety of categories, including makeup, single and group skits, paradeability, and face painting. She has also enjoyed lecturing at conventions with Marie Beck and Barb Field. One of their lectures is called, "100 Ways to Make People Smile."

Marie Beck, who nominated Barbara for this honor and is also a member of the ECCA, wrote, "[Barbara] was very instrumental in making this alley and keeping this alley an outstanding COAI Alley for many years, and still does. She not only held office more than once and headed committees, she was always behind the scenes helping others run various programs, encouraged others to take part in all COAI programs, conventions, and events. Barbara has been responsible for ECCA entering award programs, such as the Charlie Award, which we won five times. She has nominated several of our local clowns for Clown of the Year, and she received that honor herself in 2011."



Top to bottom: Early photo of Sparky. Barbara Bird. Look who's reading *The New Calliope* at a small school in the High Atlas mountain range in Morocco, 2014. Early photo of Sparky. Barbara Bird.

She has been traveling as an international ambassador for COAI for years, making trips to China, Morocco, Costa Rica, and Germany. She fondly remembers traveling to a small village in Costa

Rica, sharing red noses with all the children, and learning that “a red nose is universal.” She continues, “No one should go anywhere without a red nose.”

On her trip to the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, she and her daughter visited a tiny school with just sixteen students. She had brought forty red noses with her, just in case, but she still ran out! All the mothers and grandmothers showed up at the school to join in the excitement, and each one put on a red nose and giggled happily with their children. Barbara and her daughter brought out bubbles and face paint and were swarmed. Joy, fun, and laughter became the common language. “It was the trip of a lifetime,” she says.

On another trip to Costa Rica, her tour guide noticed that red nose and told her that his sister did face painting. Because of that connection, Barbara made a friendship with a clown in Costa Rica that continues until today.

Barbara is also one of the founders of the Red Nose Response, which was organized as an Alley shortly after Hurricane Katrina. She has worked in disaster shelters, provided training to volunteers, taught skills to the public to be prepared for natural disasters, taught lectures at conventions regarding making grab-and-go bags for first responders, written



Newtown Red Nose Response clowns on December 29, 2012, following the Sandy Hook school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut.

the newsletter, and maintained a database of the 1,100 members. Barbara continues to work with other leaders, such as Mike Cox, Bob and Teresa Gretton, and Jeremy Collins, to change the face of the Red Nose Response and find ways that they can be involved. The Red Nose Response is a worthwhile pursuit, which Barbara feels needs to take on another form now.

Barbara is mostly known for her character named “Sparky,” though she has a few other characters, including “Dr. Nose-a-Lot,” which is her main character for hospital and nursing home visits. Because of the focus of her work, Barbara chooses to use a different look than the more traditional clown. She doesn’t wear a wig or white face. Dr.



Nose-a-Lot has a white lab coat with fun buttons and badges that fits in well in the health care atmosphere. It is also a comfortable costume which allows her to easily move and work. She also has “Addy-Tude,” a feisty elderly character who enjoys suggestive banter with her adults-only audiences.

Although her humor therapy is Barbara’s main focus, she has competed in many conventions with one of her other characters, “Mumzee,” a granny with a much more extravagant costume.



Left to right: Barbara Bird. Clowning in China. Barbara and two grandchildren placing Top 10 in group competition, 2009.

One of the highlights of her clowning career was competing in a group skit in the Indiana convention as Mumzee with two of her grandchildren and placing in the top ten.

Barbara's current activities include her visits to three different local hospitals with Clowns on Rounds and her visits to nursing homes with Caring Clowns. She visits individual patients in their rooms, as well as the staff and visitors. Barbara has kept a journal of her daily experiences for the decades of her clowning life. She now has an amazing collection of stories and advice that enhance her life and the lives of other clowns she teaches.

Her favorite part of clowning is the opportunity to touch lives. She says, "Knowing I touched someone, and they touched me. I made a difference, even for a moment. That has enriched my life." Because she had a career in health care, she's comfortable in the hospital setting and able to relate to both patients and staff in a personal way. "One day, I was in the lobby of the hospital, and a man came up to me and asked if he could take a picture with me. A friend took a series of photos. Later, I received a note from the man. He explained that was the worst day of his life. He'd been diagnosed with advanced lung cancer. He said, 'I saw you, and there was hope. I'm going to have surgery and I hope you can come visit me.' A week or



so later, I got a message that he'd had his surgery. He was in the ICU and wanted me to visit. He survived, and it was an intense but amazing experience."

Another time, the chaplain at the hospital contacted Barbara and asked her to visit a man in the ICU who was very sick. When she and the other clowns visited, he lit up. He improved and was eventually discharged, but he came regularly to an outpatient clinic and they enjoyed their visits together. Months later, that man, who lived on Social Security benefits, sent her a check for twenty-five dollars for Clowns on Rounds. She still gets a note from him every year. "I touched somebody," she says. "But that person touched me, and you don't forget something like that."

One young man came upon Dr. Nose-a-Lot in the short-term psychiatric unit

of the hospital and said, "I don't like clowns, but I really like old ladies!" Eli was another young boy Barbara met in the pediatric unit. He quickly warmed up to her as she made her rounds. "I did a red nose transplant on him," she says. She also gave him a squeaker for his red nose. "I left him with enough to harass the staff!" The next week, she arrived, and he was waiting for her. He had made a clown hat out of a Styrofoam cup and put his clown name, "Patty," on it. He was wearing his red nose, a face mask, and had his bag of tricks. One of the nurses told her that Eli wanted to be just like her.

In addition to her humor therapy work at hospitals and nursing homes, Barbara does face painting at fundraising events. As she has experienced with her clown characters, her face painting skills have also evolved and changed over the years. She enjoys the way face painting involves family entertainment, though she has also enjoyed doing events for seniors.

Barbara is thrilled to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from COAL. "It takes my breath away because of what it means, but it doesn't mean I'm going to quit!" She is grateful to have had great family support all along the way, and the main topic for conversation within her family is whether Barbara will be wearing a red nose at her granddaughter's upcoming wedding. In addition to her biological family's support, she is grateful to all the support she has received from her clown family.



Left: Clowning at Children's Hospital of Nevada in 2016. Standing: Kosuke Omune from Nagoya, Japan and Mike "Dr. Fun E. Bone" Bednerak from Oregon. Seated: Judy Reddy Conner from Indiana and Barbara "Dr. Nose-a-Lot" Bird from New York. Right: Barbara with her ninety-seven-year-old mother during International Clown Week.



From the President

Mike "Bonkers" Cox

By the time this message arrives on your computer or in the mail, winter will be about over, and it will be time to welcome spring! It's time to get ready to put your clown on and prepare for the 2020 season.

This issue has the 2020-2022 declarations for the COAI Board. Please take the time to read each one so that you can vote for the member of your choice. Also, please note the vacancies that still exist. All nineteen positions were open for nominations. (The Director of Junior Joeys will be appointed by the new board.) COAI received nominations for thirteen positions, leaving six positions to be appointed by the new board in July. The board works for COAI members and needs your feedback to keep us going and growing into the future. If you see an open position that appeals to you, please let the board know now. I know that our membership includes some great clowns and entertainers who desire to see COAI thrive into the future. These are the clowns who need to step forward to say, "I am qualified, and I want to take over a vacant position," and make COAI better. The most important open position is the treasurer. Will you be the one to step forward to fill this position and be appointed by the new board? I encourage every COAI member to vote this year and prove to this board that they have

your full respect. Every vote counts, and yours is important. Please vote to show that you care about the future of COAI.

We are all looking forward to a great convention in Niagara Falls! Connie and Jim have shown a lot of commitment to make every effort to ensure this convention is exciting and memorable. I can't wait to see everyone and take part in this convention, my last as your COAI President—but not my last COAI Convention!

Until the next time! Let us hear from you about this election, about the 2020 Convention, and about COAI as a whole. Communication is important for any organization to succeed. Let's come together and make these the Roaring Twenties!

TNC



HOW TO VOTE IN THE BOARD ELECTION

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

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

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

New COAI Member Benefit Announced

All COAI members may now access free books on the COAI website at www.mycoai.com. The growing library is a companion to The Vault, which hosts thirty-seven years of *The New Calliope*. In the "Free Books" section, members can now read such



titles as COAI's *Clowning Basics*, David Ginn's *Starting in Magic* and *Keep It a Secret*, Leslie Ann Akin's *Adventures in Clowning*, and Samuel Patrick Smith's *Big Laughs for Little People*. Additional titles will be added throughout the year. These books have a retail value of more than twice a COAI annual membership. Please note that these are not available as downloads but may be read online using your computer, smartphone, or tablet.

www.FreeMasonShrine.com

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2020 COAI Niagara Falls “The Mighty!”

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (*SUBJECT TO CHANGE*)

MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2020

3:00–7:00 p.m. Early Registration

3:00–7:00 p.m. Dealers’ Set-Up

TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2020

8:00–10:30 a.m. Dealers’ Set-Up

8:00–Noon Registration

8:00–9:00 a.m. Catching Up with Old and New Friends

10:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Dealers’ Room Open

10:45 a.m.–Noon Lectures

Bob Gretton: Create a Memory, Make a Rose (An Interactive Class)

Glenn Kohlberger: Tool Kit for Skits!

Adam Schill: Balloon Twisting for Newbies

Noon Lunch on your own

1:00–2:00 p.m. Mentor Meeting for First Timers

1:00–2:00 p.m. Lectures

Cleon Babcock: Using Parliamentary Procedure in Your Alley

Merrily Johnston: Ride Inside Balloons

1:00–2:00 p.m. Dealers’ Room Closed

1:00–5:30 p.m. Registration

2:00–5:00 p.m. Dealers’ Room Open and Competition Sign-up Table

2:30–3:30 p.m. Competitions Q&A with Bill LeBlanc (COAI Director of Competitions)

2:30–3:45 p.m. Lectures

Adam Schill: Printed Rounds Make the World Go Round!

Merrily Johnston: Balloon Bouquets using 350s

Lee Andrews: Marketing for Clowns

4:00–5:15 p.m. KEYNOTE ADDRESS: David “Mr. Rainbow” Bartlett

6:00 p.m. Dinner on your own

7:00 p.m. Dealers’ Showcase

(The Dealer’s Room will reopen following the Dealers’ Showcase and remain open until 11:00 p.m.)

10:00 p.m. Hospitality

JAMS (All members of a JAM must clean up after themselves!)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2020

7:30–9:30 a.m. Hospitality in your room from previous night

8:00–Noon Registration

8:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Dealers’ Room Open

8:30–9:00 a.m. Morning Update

9:00–11:00 a.m. Face Painting Competition

9:00–10:15 a.m.	Lectures Mike Bednarek: Simplicity, Stupidity, and Truth David “Mr. Rainbow” Bartlett: Ukulele Bill “Skidder” Baldwin: Something Out of Nothing!
10:30–11:45 a.m.	Judges’ Workshop (COAI Director of Competitions)
10:30–11:45 a.m.	Lectures Merrily Johnston: Rainbow Paints for Speed and Excellence Joe Barney: Santa’s Got a Brand-New Bag!
Noon	Lunch on your own
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Dealers’ Room Closed
1:00–3:30 p.m.	General Membership Meeting
1:00–5:30 p.m.	Registration
2:30–6:00 p.m.	Dealers’ Room Open
3:30–5:00 p.m.	COAI Competition Sign-Up Table
4:00–5:15 p.m.	Judges’ Meeting (COAI Director of Competitions)
4:00–5:15 p.m.	Lectures Ruth “Jazzy” Ceretto: Rocking the Stencil to Facepaint and Wow! Easily Amused: Vaudeville and Improv: What a Mix!
6:00 p.m.	Dinner on your own
8:00–10:00 p.m.	Easily Amused
10:00 p.m.	Hospitality JAMS (All members of a JAM <u>must</u> clean up after themselves!)

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2020

7:30–9:30 a.m.	Hospitality in your room from previous night
8:00–Noon	Registration
8:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Dealers’ Room Open
8:30–9:00 a.m.	Morning Update
9:00–Noon	Makeup Competition
9:00–10:15 a.m.	Lectures Mike Bednarek: Walkabout Physical Comedy Donuts and Punkin: Wacky Walkarounds Hal Grant: Clown Ministry
10:30–11:45 a.m.	Lectures Leslie Ann Akin: Your Clown Brand DNA Barbara Bird, Marie Beck, and Barb Field: Clowns on Rounds: 101 Ways to Spread Smiles and Laughter in Healthcare Facilities Lee Andrews: The Beauty of Great Looking Clown Makeup
Noon–1:00 p.m.	Lunch on your own
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Dealers’ Room Closed

1:00–5:00 p.m.	Registration
1:00–2:15 p.m.	Lectures Leo Desilets: Bubbles, Bubbles, BUBBLES! Adam Schill: Whose Class is it Anyway? An Improv Play Shop Adam Kruefing: Working with Puppets
1:30–4:00 p.m.	Single Skit Competition
2:30–6:00 p.m.	Dealers' Room Open
2:30–3:45 p.m.	Lectures Mary Ann Ross: Glitter Tattoos: How to Wow Kornpop McCullough: Balloon Paradeables
4:00–5:15 p.m.	Lectures Barb Field: A Clowny Science Show Glenn Kohlberger: Don't Rain on my Paradeability J.T. "Bubba" Sikes: Help! I'm Clowning, and I Can't Cut Up! (A Character-Development Workshop)
6:00 p.m.	Dinner on your own
8:00–10:00pm	STAGE SHOW: David "Mr. Rainbow" Bartlett
10:00pm	Hospitality: Next Year's COAI Conventions' Hosting Alley JAMS (All members of a JAM <u>must</u> clean up after themselves!)

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2020

7:30–9:30 a.m.	Hospitality in your room from previous night
8:00–Noon	Registration
8:00–Noon	Dealers' Room Open
8:30–9:00 a.m.	Morning Update
8:30–10:00 a.m.	Balloon Competition
9:00–10:15 a.m.	Lectures Matty Spraggins: Photos for Performers using Free Apps Leslie Ann Akin: Magical Mirthday Parties
10:30–11:45 a.m.	Lectures Matty Spraggins: Videos that Wow using Free Apps Pricilla Mooseburger: Red Nose Reader! Bob and Teresa Gretton: Skits, Bits, and Gags (An Interactive Class)
Noon–1:00 p.m.	Lunch on your own
Noon–1:30 p.m.	Dealers' Room Closed
1:00–5:00 p.m.	Registration
1:30–6:00 p.m.	Dealers' Room Open
1:00–2:15 p.m.	Lectures Punkin and Donuts: Painted Shoes and Bags Frank Bunton: Medium Skill Balloons Bob and Teresa Gretton: I Got Your Back (Working with a Partner)

2:30–3:45 p.m.	Lectures Joe Barney: Sound and Music in your Act Dale McKenzie: Playing like a Clown Bill “Skidder” Baldwin: Make Yourself Memorable
2:30–6:00 p.m.	Group Skit Competition
4:00–5:15 p.m.	Lectures Sandra Winstead: The Clown Summit and You Carol Marx: You’re Kidding! Storytelling for Big Kids Roy Stone: Using Magic to Present the Gospel
6:00 p.m.	Dinner on your own and prep for Theme Party
7:30 p.m.–Midnight	THEME NIGHT: The Mighty! Daredevils, Superheroes, and Villains

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2020

7:30–9:30 a.m.	Hospitality in your room from previous night
8:00–Noon	Registration
8:00–Noon	Dealers’ Room Open
8:30–9:00 a.m.	Morning Update
9:00–Noon	Paradeability Competition
9:00–10:15 a.m.	Lectures Dave Hill: Balloon Games Scott Correll: Working with Puppets to Create Laughter and Joy Dale McKenzie: Santa Fun and One Magical Moment
10:30–11:15	Lectures J.T. “Bubba” Sikes: Stupid Stuff for Funny People Leo Joe Baney: Skit Workshop, or How to Play with Others Frank Bunton: Advanced Skill Balloons
Noon	Dealers’ Room CLOSES and Will Not Reopen
Noon	Lunch on your own
1:00–5:00 p.m.	Registration
2:30–5:00 p.m.	COAI Auction
6:00 p.m.	Social Hour with Cash Bar
7:00–11:00 p.m.	Awards Banquet
11:00 p.m.	Hospitality

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2020

8:00–10:00 a.m.	Hospitality in your room from previous night
9:00–10:00 a.m.	Sunday Service
10:00–10:30 a.m.	Farewell

Making the Connection

Meet-and-Greet Techniques for Shy Children

By Mark Renfro



I don't know how it happens. Sometimes, it just happens. Through no effort at all on my part, children love me. That surprise hug! The unexpected (and often sloppy) kiss! All I have to do is show up, and they love me. And then, well, then there are those other times. Sometimes I have to really work to make the connection. I don't mind; I'm a clown. It's my job.

When I'm working in any kind of meet-and-greet situation, I want to make sure that every child with whom I interact has the best time possible. I want to extend the broadest invitation I can to participate in my circle of fun. Here are some tips and techniques I use when I encounter a shy or reticent child.

I look at them. When a young child comes into my area, I look at them. "The eyes are the windows of the soul," people say. That is never truer than when you are working with kids. So, I look, not through them or over them or around them, but at them. Then, I can make a judgement about what I see. For all I know, this may be their very first encounter with a real live clown, and they have no idea about what to do next, but I do. If I see any fear or hesitancy, I look away and turn my attention elsewhere, maybe to another child or a button on my vest. It doesn't really matter. By looking away and giving them some time to think, I'm letting them know I am available for them, but it is up to them if the relationship will continue.

I open my arms and relax my shoulders. By the time I look back, that shyness may have gone down a notch or two, so I can offer my first direct invitation to play with a physical gesture. I relax and open my arms. Not in a "come here and give your crazy uncle a kiss," but in a "no surprises here, you'll be safe" kind of way.

I'm prepared to back away. To a preschooler, the world is a bright, colorful place full of many new things. Sometimes, I'm able to see the approaching child long before they see me. I have years of experience to back me up when I say that the harder the parent urges, ("Look at the clown!"), the harder it becomes for the kid to focus on me. I'm standing right there, they are getting closer, and still they can't see me. Shock is never the best way to start a relationship, so sometimes the best plan is for me to put a little distance between me and the kid. I never try to work with my back up against the wall. I always want the option to take a few steps back.

I ask permission, and I listen for the answer. Children live in a world in which the big people get to make all the decisions. As a clown, I love to turn that situation upside down. I may be the big guy in the funny suit, but nothing happens until the kid says, "Yes." So I ask: "Can we be friends? Can I show you this funny thing? Is it OK if we shake hands?" A "yes" is always great, and a "no" can be great, too. It is not as much about the event or action I'm asking about that is important, but the fact that I asked.

I don't approach them. I let them come to me. Every child has a concept of personal space. It is important to let the child decide what that comfort zone is and

very important to respect that decision. The kid who is happy to observe and interact with me from ten feet away may feel threatened if I try to reduce that distance. They might be my best friend at five feet, and not my friend at four.

Think of the child who loves Santa but bursts into a tantrum when she is placed on Santa's lap. Surely, she has been prepared by her parents for her Santa visit. She has probably spent an hour or more in line observing Santa from afar. She might have made it all the way to the front of the line with no problems. But it's those last two feet.

I don't rush them or rush them along. In the same way that I have learned to respect kids' sense of space, I've learned to let them use their own timetable. Perhaps it is just a few seconds before they indicate their willingness to play. Maybe it's a few minutes or maybe not even today, but I give kids all the time they need to decide how they feel about who I am and what I'm offering. When a kid honors me by stepping up for some play, I've got all the time in the world.

I let them see me with other children. Young children have an incredible ability to be in the present moment. It doesn't matter to the shy child how much fun there was five minutes ago or how much fun there will be five minutes from now. My words don't count; I've got to show them. The easiest way to do that is to play with other kids. When a child sees me interacting with other kids in a fun and friendly matter, they are more likely to play along than if I try to tell them how much fun clowns are.

I work low and slow. I have a very important part of my costume that I feel naked without. It's not the wig or the floppy shoes. It's not the hat or the gloves. In fact, my audiences never even see this part of my wardrobe. It's my kneepads. Available from any sporting-goods store, these pads allow me to get down on my knees, no matter how hard the floor might be. Just by reducing my height, I instantly change the nature of the relationship with children. This tip isn't just

HOW-TO

for tall clowns, either. Maybe you are just five foot two. How would you feel if you had to deal with some painted thing that was ten foot four? Time after time, I've gotten the positive result I'm looking for just by getting down to the kid's level.

As I reduce my size, I also ratchet down my speed. Big, loud explosive motion has a place in clowning, and this isn't it! I keep my voice gentle and avoid any sudden movements. If I need to make a big gesture, I make it in a plane parallel with my shoulders, never at or towards the child.

I tell them it's OK to be afraid. Some kids are not shy; they are afraid. It's not anything I am doing wrong, but just the fact that I am. When I see those big round eyes and that quivering jaw (hopefully, before the tears or screams), I move away as quickly as possible. As I do, I tell them, "It's OK to be afraid. You're safe." Then, I say to the parents, "Maybe next

time." I want everyone involved to know that even though the encounter didn't go as well as the big people might have hoped, I am not upset by the situation.

I try to see every child. This one is difficult, but I do try and make eye contact with each and every child who passes through my performance area. Sometimes, the size of the crowd makes this impossible, but it is always my goal. Maybe today is not the day that a certain child wants to step up and share the fun and attention of the crowd with a clown. That's OK. Still I feel that just by seeing them, however briefly, they do not feel invisible or ignored.

Working with kids, especially shy kids, is more of an art than a science. Even on my best days, I may not be able to make the connection with every shy child who comes my way, but I'm still going to try. After all, who knows where my next new best friend is going to come from?

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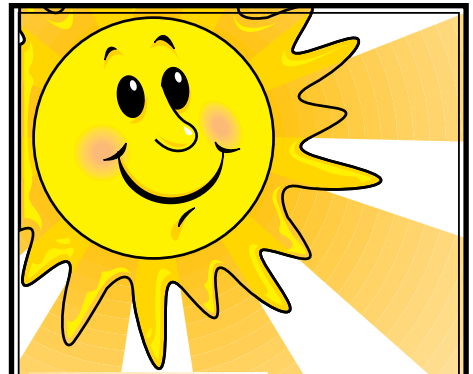
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Our Good Cheer List

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

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2 Maple Lane North
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18 Park Avenue
Garfield, NJ 07026

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97 Grafton Street, Back Door
Shrewsbury, MA 01545-5646

Fran Etzkorn
1015 Champion Circle
Longmont, CO 80503

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



GET OUT THERE AND HAVE FUN!

By Frank Bunton

What are you doing to promote clowning and gain members?

How many times during this past year have you put on your clown makeup and gone out? How many people in your area know that you clown? One thing that you can do to help promote and get people interested in clowning is to go out and be seen. Take a walk in the park, sit on a bench outside a mall, or stop at a bus stop. Be seen! Does this earn you money? Not at first, but the more often you are seen, the more often people will think of you when they might need an entertainer.

When was the last time you were in a parade? I'm not talking about something the size of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. But what about that neighborhood parade or the township's parade? You don't need to enter as if you are trying to win a trophy, although that would be nice, too. Just provide some professional clown entertainment.

Hospital visits are nice, but there are rules and procedures that you have to follow to do that. Don't break their rules or you may get ejected.

What do you do when you go out? You could do face painting, make balloon sculptures, or even do some magic tricks, but why not just put a few things in your

pockets and go meet people? Don't force yourself on them. Just let them walk up to you. Talk to them, even if they are kids, and be a little silly. Try some funny handshakes, mispronounced names, and confusing the names of the colors they may be wearing. Do anything to get a smile out of them. Most important of all is wearing your clown name badge. Have some business cards on you in case someone asks for one. If adults start acting silly with you, tell them they would make great clowns. Ask if they are interested in learning the art of clowning. This could lead to your finding a clown partner, and it could lead to COAI and your Alley gaining a new member.

Remember that you don't always have to cold call or ask someone to join clowning. However, if you aren't being seen and you don't ask anyone, how are you going to grow your Alley and COAI? You can do this even if you are a hobby clown. Get out there and have fun! **TNC**

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the Elements of Skit Creation

By Richard Smith
with Rachel Strnad

Most of the time, ideas for skits come to me during a clown convention. I hear an amusing anecdote (or wind up in the middle of one). I have the opportunity to watch and judge good skits, which inspire me. Even when I help people whose skits are falling apart, I get ideas.

However, I've been creating and performing skits for over forty years; the basic structure of a skit is ingrained in my memory. For those of you who are new to this, or are thinking about competing for the first time, let's walk through the basic elements of creating a skit.

Every skit has three basic parts: the beginning, introducing the character; the middle, setting up the situation; and the end, the surprise. When skits don't work, usually the fix is in one of these three areas.

The Beginning.

For single skits, the beginning is essentially your character's introduction, so it shouldn't take much longer than it takes you to walk on stage. It is essential that the audience understands who you are within a second or two of seeing you or the rest of the skit won't make sense. You have a limited amount of time to communicate this, so make sure your character's look and body language are perfect before you perform. It also helps to choose an easily recognizable character. For example, I performed a skit as a knight heading to the jousting tournament. I walked onstage dressed for the part. If you aren't able to create a completely new costume for your skit, having enough additional elements that are recognizable can work. And again, make sure your body language and facial expressions exude your character.

The Middle

The bulk of the skit might be taken up with the situation the character is in. Timing is everything here, because skits are usually around three minutes long. Don't try to crowd too many ideas or props into the time or you'll be too rushed. Three is usually a good number. Make sure the set-up is brief as well. Going back to the knight skit, my stage was already set up with a wooden knight standing on one side, with a sign reading, "Jousting this way." As soon as I walked on, my set-up was already complete.

I walked over to the sign and said, "Oh! I gotta go to that!" Looking at the knight, I saw I needed a sword, so I pulled mine out, and it flopped over. I looked at the audience and said, "Well this won't work! I gotta get a new one." So I walked around



Richard and his sister, Charlene, ready for their skit "Identical."

the knight, swapping out my sword for a giant feather duster, which I brandished at the audience.

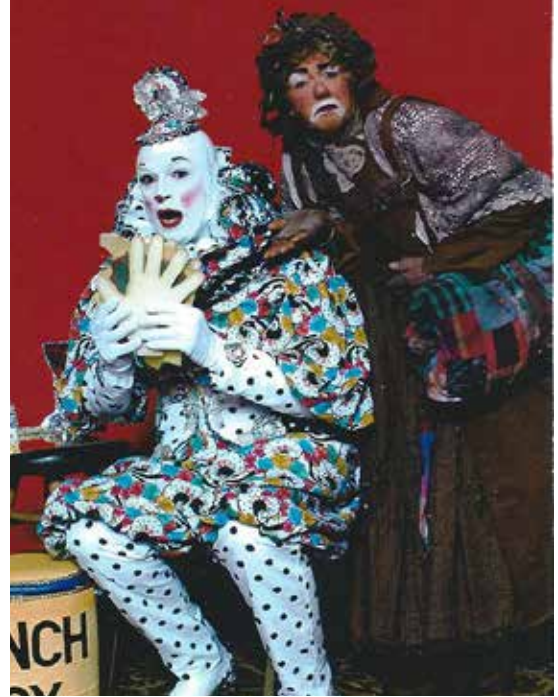
Next, I looked at the knight and saw I need a shield. So, back around the knight I went and grabbed a pillow, which had feathers falling out all over the place.

The final thing I needed was a helmet, judging by the wooden knight, so I flipped my visor down. "Oh, this won't work." I said, "I can't see!" For a third time, I walked around the knight and swapped my helmet out for a jester's hat. When I came around to the audience, I realized what I was wearing and said "Wait a minute!" Then I flipped the jousting sign over, so it now read "Jesting Classes this Way." Now fully equipped for jesting, I marched off stage to the audience's laughter.

This skit kept to about three props that turned into gags: my sword, my shield, and my helmet. Since I had the props easily to hand behind the wooden knight, I could cycle through them pretty quickly and there was no dead time.



Above: Richard and Nicholas "Doc" Reed perform "Doctor." Right: Richard and their award-winning skit "Lunch."



This is particularly important when you are working with props. If it takes a long time to get the props out or set them up during the skit, you will lose your audience.

The skit's structure is a fairly common *yes-and* structure. I need a new sword ... and it's a feather duster. I need a shield ... and it's a pillow. I need a new helmet ... and it's a jester's hat. This structure can also be used to ramp up tension. In my skit "William Tell," for example, I popped a balloon over my head three times, first with nothing in it, then with confetti in it, then with water in it.



Richard as Penelope in his award-winning skit, "I Gotta Be Me."

The End—Surprise!

Your ending should always move the audience, whether to tears, sighs, or laughter, and ought to be unexpected. If your audience can guess the ending long before you get there, you need to go back and do some reworking. The end comprises what I call the blow-off, and then a logical way of getting off the stage. The blow-off is the surprise bit, the punchline of the joke, the sudden turn, the concluding paragraph. It can be a line you say. It could be a prop that somehow falls apart or whatever you like, but it must be understood and move the audience. In my knight skit, the blow-off is the moment I turn the sign around. This transforms my bumbling attempts at knightly accoutrements into a well-put-together jester's costume. The audience laughs and shares in my triumph as I walk off the stage.

That blow-off also provided a means for my exit: since the jester's classes were off stage and I was planning on attending, I had to leave the stage. This is very important when creating your skit. Some people can have a really funny blow-off, but no reason to get off the stage afterward, which creates an awkward conclusion that overshadows the blow-off.

Practice, Practice, Practice.

Once you have all your elements and you think they work together, practice them until they are perfect. And don't just

practice them to yourself, try your skit out on your family, friends, other peers in your alley. If your local church or nursing home will let you, try performing it there. Get feedback from your audience and your peers. Listen to their response. Can they hear you? Is your character quickly recognizable? Do they understand the blow-off? Are you taking too long? What if something goes wrong? Can you keep going when your prop breaks or the music doesn't start? Each performance, take what you've learned back to your skit and see where you can improve. By the time you bring it to the international convention, it will be the finely tuned piece of art you want it to be.

Note from the editor: Richard called me the Saturday after we worked on this article to tell me it would be his last. He was likely heading into the hospital and his doctors weren't sanguine about him coming home again. He wanted to extend his thanks to everyone who helped make him the clown he is. Their names could fill a book in itself.

He also wanted to thank Laurel and Sammy Smith. If they hadn't encouraged him to start writing, he would never have begun, and his dreams of passing on his knowledge would not have been fulfilled. "Last of all, thank you Rachel. If you hadn't taken the time to turn my rambling into articles, I might have given up on writing." **TNC**

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Sharpening the Knife that Cuts Some Slack



By Sammy Smith

Abraham Lincoln offered this advice to a young Army captain: “Quarrel not at all. No man determined to make the most of himself can spare time for personal contention. Better to give your path to a dog than be bitten by him in contesting for the right. Even killing the dog would not cure the bite.”

This can be a difficult course to follow in fields full of sensitive creative types, such as clowning or magic. Arguments start for the strangest of reasons, and those participating may not always be forthcoming about their true motivations. Perhaps it’s a personality conflict, resentment over your better makeup, or unhappiness that you got a gig they wanted. Or, possibly, they’re just plain mean. But as Oswald Chambers noted, “There’s always one fact more in every man’s case about which I know nothing.”

Years ago I received a letter from a man—a once-famous juggler and magician—who lived in a neighboring town. He was selling some magic equipment, he said. Would I like to come look at it? There was no listing in the phone book, so I wrote him back and set an appointment.

An elderly man met me at the door. He showed me the things he wanted to sell, I made him an offer, and he accepted. Later, as we sat around talking about show business, I remarked that I wished I had met him years before since we lived so close to each other and had a lot in common.

“We *have* met before,” he exclaimed, “and you wouldn’t give me the time of day!” He went on to explain that when I was a teenager giving a magic show at the local community center, he had come backstage to meet me, and I brushed him off.

I didn’t remember the encounter, but I could imagine the scenario. I, a nervous fifteen-year-old was backstage preparing for one of the biggest performances of my life, and someone I didn’t know came back to chat.

Now, all these years later, I was sitting in his living room, and he was still hurt. I explained why I had probably been preoccupied, and I apologized for offending him. After I left his house, I wondered if he had really accepted my apology. He never said so.

A few months later, his wife wrote to me that her husband had died. He had sold his entire collection of magic books, she said, except for one large, special volume. Would I come over to the house and pick it up? “He wanted to be sure I gave you this book after he died,” she said.

As I unwrapped the book, the message he never spoke in life was finally articulated in death: “Apology accepted.”

I appreciated the gift, but I had the poignant realization that he deprived himself of the joy of reconciliation by having someone else make the gesture after he was gone.

Most of us probably prefer Lincoln’s plan to “quarrel not at all,” but if we are harboring a disagreement that was planted in the dead of winter, let’s look around. Spring is on the way, and it’s a time for new beginnings. **TNC**

HARRY'S HILARITIES

Here are some quips to use with audience assistants. Have fun and get laughs, but always treat your volunteers with respect.

Do you know why you can’t use this finger? [Hold up index finger.] Because it’s mine!

Choose your words with taste—you may have to eat them!

What do you do for a living? Oh! My grandfather was an artist, my father was an artist, and I’m not working either!

[Hand money to a spectator.] Put this under your pillow tonight, and in the morning you’ll have a tooth.

[When you ask for their name and they only give you their first name.] Think hard! It usually comes in two parts.

[As assistant is walking up to the stage.] Just move your feet; the body will follow.

[Helper can’t stand still.] Why are you moving? They haven’t thrown anything yet!

How old are you? Is that Celsius of Fahrenheit?

[They drop something.] You have the Midas touch. Everything you touch turns into a muffler.

[When asked, “How did you do that?”] Promise not to tell? I did too!



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



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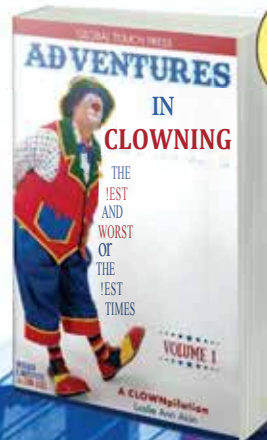


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How Do You Revive Your Clown Club?

By Patricia "Pricilla Mooseburger" Manuel

It is no secret that the clown population is aging. We can mope around and talk about the good old days if we want, but I always think it's better to move on and come up with a hair-brained scheme! Nothing perks things up quite like a dumb idea. At the very least, it will get people talking.

May I suggest you come up with a common cause? That's right. Find something in your community that you can rally around in some way. If your clown club is fading, start talking. Find out what interests everyone in your group. Maybe you would like to help at a local food pantry in costume? Kids go with their families, and it can be stressful for everyone. Clowns can be a welcome diversion. Your group may decide to make balloons, do face painting, or help with bagging groceries as clowns.

Local senior living facilities are full of people who could use a laugh. Why not do some shows or rounds from room to room? It is much easier to get into a nursing home than a hospital. If you create a funny nurse or doctor character to use when you are doing rounds, you will be warmly received.

One of the reasons people quit clowning is they feel like they can't do what they used to do. Working in a group takes the pressure off. You only need to do one routine instead of a whole show, and no long parades or festivals. Work on your own terms. My club loves to do shows at care centers. Most of you know I belong to The Clown Arounds of Wright County. We attract clowns from all over the area to be in our group. We have a fun group that performs the shows. Not everyone makes it to every show, but we always have enough.

The Red Hot Clowns are an all-volunteer group of clowns in Surprise, Arizona. They noticed their phones stopped ringing around the time the scary clown phenomenon hit, and they were getting fewer and fewer invitations to local events. The group even got turned away from their local senior care center



because the activities director had a thing against clowns. They decided to be proactive and change their community. The whole group signed up to be Red Nose Readers and will be reading at afterschool programs in their area. What fun! Red Nose Readers is a non-profit organization working to promote literacy, kindness, and joy through the art of clowning by reading to children as clowns. The group used some of their funds, paid for everyone to be a member, and got the group discount. The clowns go alone or in pairs and cover a lot of ground. These wonderful grandmas will bring the message of joy to children and their teachers. You can bet they will change minds and hearts. Your clown club or group could adopt your local library or Head Start program and go read to kids, too! They will go back to knocking on the door of the senior center, as well, with a nationwide non-profit to back them up.

Sometimes, things need a fresh start. Send out an e-mail telling your club you are going to spend part of your next meeting having a brainstorming session for new ideas. (Don't forget the snacks!) It is all about communication and networking. Pulling together to do something new brings life to a group. A new hair-brained scheme can serve to get your club's big funny foot in the door. Just be open to the possibilities.

If you are interested in more information or a group rate for Red Nose Readers, check them out at www.rednosereader.org or email rednosereader@gmail.com. An easy training session is available with membership.



COAI DECLARATIONS OF CANDIDACY

For information on how to vote in the 2020 COAI Elections, see page 7. Please note that no candidates are running for Treasurer and for Latin, International Midwest, Northwest, and Southeast Regional Vice Presidents. These positions may be filled by the President with board approval.

PRESIDENT



Adam Schill

Hello! It has been an absolute blast representing COAI as the Director of Education this last term! I have enjoyed it so much

that I'd like to throw my hat in the ring and run for your COAI President in the upcoming election. One of my goals as Director of Education has been to help bring a younger audience to COAI and make our great organization more appealing to the next generation of clowns. So far, we have made great strides with this by having a greater online presence with some new website tools and increasing our social media presence, as well as getting other younger current members involved with various aspects of COAI.

Since our words in this declaration are limited to two hundred fifty words, I would love to answer any other questions you may have via e-mail or in person at the next convention in Niagara Falls. Let's sit down for coffee or lunch and talk.

For those who don't know me, I have been clowning since I was eleven years old. I make a good portion of my living as an entertainer and have had the opportunity to perform and teach across the country and even on national television. I have a wife, Lorraine, and two sons, Emmett (age five) and Eli (born this past August).

In closing, I would love to have your vote as the next president of COAI and be able to help lead this great organization toward many more successful years of growth and progress.

VICE PRESIDENT



Dan 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 in all parts of 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—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 for Dan "Fitzwilly" Langwell for Executive Vice President.

SECRETARY

Beth "Pickles" Cedarholm



It is with sheer excitement that I announce my candidacy for the position of COAI Secretary for the 2020–2022 term.

Serving COAI as Midwest Regional Vice President has been

an eye-opening experience for me. I understand more than ever what it takes to keep a great organization like COAI moving forward: teamwork, effective communication, creativity, and a genuine love for clowning. As Midwest RVP, I have enjoyed working with fellow board members to help sustain and grow COAI. I have also enjoyed serving as a liaison between Midwestern COAI members and the board and being a regular contributor to *The New Calliope* magazine. Now, as my term draws to a close, I feel that I can even better utilize my energy and talents in COAI's secretarial role.

As a former journalist, with an eye for detail and a love for the written word, I feel that I am uniquely qualified to take on COAI's secretarial duties. I understand how vital an accurate record is for an organization, and if elected, I am prepared to be a dedicated clerk for COAI.

Those of you who know me personally know that I have been clowning as "Pickles" since 2001, and that clowning is a huge part of my life. Nothing would bring me greater joy than to support my fellow clowns – new and experienced alike – by serving on COAI's board as secretary. Thank you for your consideration.

DIRECTOR OF ALLEY AND REGIONAL SUPPORT



Gloria Sterrett

I thank you in advance for your vote of confidence in having me continue as Director of Alley and Regional Support. I have been clowning since 1988. It has brought incredible joy to me and to my audiences of all ages. Clowning has taken me to places beyond my imagination and expectations, and for that, I will be forever grateful. Now it's time for me to give back. To mediate between alley members and regional directors and the Executive Committee is my goal. With your help, we can make this an even greater organization which will continue on for years to come. The public is our future!

DIRECTOR OF CONVENTIONS



Frank Bunton

The person who fills this position must attend to all applications that alleys submit to host a convention, and coordinate with the board to host a convention when no alleys come forward. After two years as Director of Conventions, I have learned (and am still learning) what it takes to produce a successful convention. If you think I've done well in this position, please cast your vote for me. If you think I've not done well, send me an e-mail and tell me what could be improved. I'm not above learning. My e-mail is listed on the inside cover of the magazine.

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



Alene "Rufflez" Kraus

I am humbly adding my name as a candidate for Education Director.

When I considered retiring from teaching,

I immediately thought Clown School! The middle schoolers I taught explained to me how I was already a clown. Ahem. At the end of the school year, I moved to The Villages, Florida, attended Clown School, joined The Villages Clown Alley, and found my tribe!

I held a variety of board positions in The Villages Clown Alley, including Education Director and a two-year term as President. I am a worker bee! I am proud and blessed to say that I experienced great working relationships with our new clowns and our seasoned clowns. This is where I cut my clown teeth. This is where I learned to appreciate all avenues to clowning. These are some of the skills, balance, and awareness I can bring to this position.

I moved back to Pennsylvania in 2016 and had to change my mindset from clowning as a volunteer to creating a viable clowning business from the ground up. I learned the importance of building and maintaining relationships. I bring these skills with me to COAI.

I continue to add to my bag of tricks by attending local and national conventions. I remain active in my local clown association (MACA) and have attended Moose Camp and ACA.

Going forward, it is my intent to continue to utilize my skills to grow and learn alongside my colleagues. I am looking forward to another great year!

DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP



Carrie Ray

I've been a member of the COAI Board since 2016. My first role on the Board was the CHARLIE Award Chairperson, which I still currently hold. I have also served as the Director of Membership for the last year and a half. I'm also a part of the Award Advisory Council and Revenue Committee.

I've been a member for the last nine and a half years with three different Clown Alleys within the Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, area (Texas Mid Cities Clown Alley, where I held the position of President, Vice President, Social Media Chairperson and Board Member; Happi Thymes Clown Alley; and Cowtown Clown Alley). I'm also a member of the Fort Worth Magicians Club.

My love for clowning began when I was in the eighth grade. I found that being a clown made me happy and that it filled a void in my life. Life is short; that is why God created clowns. We are His voice to bring love, smiles, joy, and lasting memories to all we encounter and meet. Plus, I love what I do, and I do what I love, which is very rewarding.

If reelected, my focus will be on building our membership, internationally and locally, and to find ways to bring in more revenue and benefits into the organization so that we can offer more to our members.

Please consider reelecting me as your next COAI Director of Membership. Your vote would be greatly appreciated.

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

CANADA

Dale McKenzie



I have been clowning for more than thirty years in the Calgary region, and I am the currently the incumbent Regional Vice President to the Region of Canada, 2018–2020. I have had three previous terms (2010–2012, 2012–2014, 2016–2018) proudly serving the vast Canadian region.

My wheels are in motion to increase the number of COAI alleys in Canada, as well as grease the wheels of the alleys which have gone silent. We must encourage our existing membership to renew their membership and encourage others to join this great organization which we

all love. With the Canadian membership assisting me along the way and a strong ambassador program, I hope to achieve that goal one province at a time. It takes a strong passion for the art and a true desire to get the job done and to make this happen. I have that passion and drive to represent the members of the COAI in Canada.

During my term 2014–2016, I was proudly a part of the existing board that took a struggling COAI which was in the red and had a dim future and turned it around, putting it in the black with a growing future. This took a team effort and I was so proud to be a part of that team.

COAI membership is growing again. We have insurance, and great insurance it is. However, it is not yet available to members in Canada and the international membership, but I am working on an insurance plan that will satisfy all our members' insurance needs.

I am asking you to accept this notice of intent to run for the office of Canadian Regional Vice President for the term 2020 to 2022, asking you to support me once again with your confidence and your vote for another term.

MIDEAST



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 love to travel and visit.

To give a little of my history, 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, I joined the Navy and carried my clowning along with me for twenty years, which gave me 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 many. If you know me or have heard me talk, you know what I am talking about. I would love the opportunity to follow up with another two years as the Mideast Regional VP 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



Bill LeBlanc

I would like to declare myself as a candidate for COAI Northeast Regional Vice President for the upcoming 2020 election. I am currently serving in this position and have done so for the past several years. I also presently serve as Competition Director for the COAI International Convention.

I have been involved in clowning for over twenty years in a variety of capacities, including leadership positions in my local area. I have competed and been very successful at the local and international level. I create my own foam props and have enjoyed the opportunity to teach this skill and share the knowledge of being a tramp/hobo clown.

Each year, I attend conventions and workshops to continue to learn and improve my skills and share with others. I am committed to serving on the Board of COAI and hope that my fellow clowns in the Northeast Region will continue to support me as I represent them for the next two years.



Connie Morrow

I have been clowning for almost twenty-four years and have been a member of COAI since 2003. While I'm proud of my achievements in winning awards such as the individual CHARLIE Award in 2014, being in the Top Ten in competitions in Erie (2015) and Richmond (2018), and more recently the COAI 2020 Clown of the Year, I am proudest of my ability to make both young and old laugh and forget their troubles, even for a little while. I am the founder of the (sadly now disbanded) Corn E. Clowns of Erie County (Alley 394) and am currently an instructor for a clown club here in my town of West Seneca, New York. I also teach balloon classes in my area. I am the official clown of Camp Good Days and Special Times (a group for kids with cancer or who have a family member with cancer). For seventeen years, I've also been the clown for Hunter's Hope, an organization that was formed by Football Hall of Famer Jim Kelly and his wife, Jill, after their son Hunter was diagnosed with Krabbe disease. I will focus my energies not only on the Northeast, but also on contributing to the future of COAI and bringing in the younger generation to keep clowning alive.

NORTH CENTRAL



Sara Kreutz

I have been an active member of COAI for the past seven years and have served as North Central RVP since 2018. Last year, I started a North Central COAI Facebook group and have promoted COAI at non-COAI events, such as a regional Fellowship of Christian Magicians conference. I worked with Junior Joey Director Regina Wollrabe to get one of our North Central members on the cover of *The New Calliope* and to gather

information on him to be included in the article.

I have been an active member of Sioux City Sillies (Alley 185) since July of 2011 and a member of Omaha Wild Clowndrum (Alley 147) since 2015. I have served as the local ambassador to COAI for Sioux City Sillies since June of 2013. I spearheaded and currently maintain the website for Sioux City Sillies.

Since 2012 I have been an integral part in gaining local publicity for performing for the events scheduled for International Clown Week in Sioux City. I received Honorable Mention for the CHARLIE Award in 2014 for my use of publicity in using social media to publicize International Clown Week. In August 2017, I contacted local media resulting in a full front page color photo and article in our local newspaper publicizing International Clown Week.

I work tirelessly to put clowns and a positive image of us in the forefront. I have worked my summers as a professional paid clown entertainer since the fall of 2009, so I have a good knowledge base of hometown clowning and the needs of the working clown today. I am passionate about clown education and expanding our knowledge for the clown entertainers who are out there performing for their communities today.

I am easily accessible to members of the North Central region. I check my

e-mails daily and am easily accessible on social media. You can always message me through either of these two venues or standard snail mail and I will do my best to get back to you as soon as possible. If I don't know the answer, I will do my best to find someone who does. I would appreciate your vote for Regional Vice President for the North Central Region.

SOUTH CENTRAL

Gemma Anderson



I've been a member of COAI and three different clown alleys within Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, for many years.

I'm currently the Vice President of Texas mid Cities Clown Alley. I've also held other board positions within the Mid Cities Clown Alley that is in Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, area.

I am a member of the Texas Clown Association, Happi Thymes Clown Alley, and founder of Payasos Latinos de America Alley 23, in which I've been a member for over ten years.

My focus, if elected the RVP for South Central, will be supporting my region by finding ways to build membership and keep current membership. I will work with alleys to help build Junior Joey membership and programs. Plus, I will create more tools to build better

communication from the RVP to the South Central alleys and members. In addition, I will focus on recruiting more Latinos and international clowns to get involved in local alleys and COAI.

Your current South Central RVP, Matthew Spraggins, is a member of the same clown alley as I am. If you elect me, I will have him there to support me in this position until I get on board with the process and procedures.

Please consider voting for me as I will make you proud and prove I can make a difference. I am also bilingual, which will be an added benefit for the organization.



Kornpop McCullough

Good morning. I would like to submit myself for the position of South Central Regional Vice President. I have been a

clown since the age of twelve and have made it my full-time occupation for the last fifteen years. I formed the Rosy Nose Clown Alley in Tyler, Texas, and am still an officer. I was on the board of the Texas Clown Association and put on one of the most successful clown conventions ever for that organization. I now teach and vend at clown and magic conventions across the country. My website is www.kornpop.com and my number is 903-571-3089 if you have any questions. Thanks, and I look forward to hearing from you.

2020 COAI Board Election Ballot

For those who do not have access to a computer, please photocopy this ballot and mail to Mike Cox, 9415 Alameda Ave., Richmond, VA 23294, postmarked no later than June 7, 2020.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

COAI number _____

Region _____

If you do not know your membership number or region, call the COAI Business Office at 1-352-357-1676.

PRESIDENT

Adam Schill

VICE PRESIDENT

Dan Langwell

SECRETARY

Beth "Pickles" Cedarholm

DIRECTOR OF ALLEY AND REGIONAL SUPPORT

Gloria Sterrett

DIRECTOR OF CONVENTIONS

Frank Bunton

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Alene "Rufflez" Kraus

DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP

Carrie Ray

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

Only vote for a candidate in your region.

Canada

Dale McKenzie

Mideast

Bobby Semon

Northeast

Bill LeBlanc

Connie Morrow

North Central

Sara Kreutz

South Central

Gemma Anderson

David McCullough

THE LAST WALK-AROUND

CLOWN CALENDAR

April 14–19, 2020

COAI Annual Convention

Niagara Falls, New York

www.mycoai.com

June 7–12, 2020

Clown Camp

La Crosse, Wisconsin

www.clowncamp.org

June 27–July 3, 2020

Unicycling Society of America Convention

Madison, Wisconsin

www.uniusa.org

July 8–11, 2020

**International Brotherhood
of Magicians Convention**

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

www.magician.org

July 13–19, 2020

International Jugglers Association Festival

El Paso, Texas

www.juggle.org

July 15–18, 2020

**International Ventriloquists
Society Convention**

Erlanger, Kentucky

www.ventriloquistsociety.com

July 21–26, 2020

Mooseburger Clown Arts Camp

Buffalo, Minnesota

www.mooseburger.com

August 9–15, 2020

American Clown Academy

Forsyth, Georgia

www.americancrownacademy.com

November 12–15, 2020

**Mid-Atlantic Clown
Association Convention**

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

www.midatlanticclownassociation.com



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

Mary “Smilee” Andreatta-Carlock

Mary “Smilee” Andreatta-Carlock, 56, of Springfield, Illinois, died January 11, 2020. Her first sign of illness occurred on her way to Clown Camp in July 2019. In Minnesota she was diagnosed with a brain tumor which took her life just a short six months later. She passed away peacefully surrounded by family and friends. Mary was married to Amon Paul Carlock, Jr. on August 27, 1988, and he preceded her in death. She is survived by her two brothers, two step-children, and several nieces and nephews. Mary worked for the State of Illinois, House of Representative Clerks Office and Legislative Information Systems until she retired in 2015.



Mary was an absolute bundle of joy and truly brought smiles to everyone that had the pleasure of knowing her. Mary and her husband Paul were two of the driving forces in the Lincoln's Laffers COAI Clown Alley. Mary helped organize and hold many of the Children's Clown Clinics the alley put together, and helped decorate floats for many of the State Fair Parades the alley participated in. Mary was an excellent photographer, and volunteered her time and talents to the many events and fundraisers she participated in. To know her was to love her, and she will be sadly missed by all who had that privilege.

—Submitted by Rev. Anna Pohl

Joyce “Ida-No” Olson

It was a sad day indeed that the North Central Region got the news of the passing of Joyce “Ida-No” Olson on November 23.

Joyce was the total clown. She was award winning for makeup, wearing costumes she made herself. She cracked everyone up with her skits. She traveled internationally as a clown ambassador. Joyce previously served on the COAI Board as Treasurer and North Central Regional Vice President.

The thing we all loved most about Joyce was her willingness to share and to train others. As a member of Omaha's Wild Clowndum and Life in Christ's Circus, she taught every aspect of clowning with the highest standards but always with a clown heart. Her laugh was iconic and her energy level amazing.

We were so lucky to have Joyce in our midst and will miss her terribly.

—Submitted by Judy “Dear Heart” Quest



NIAGARA FALLS 2020



The Mighty

**COAI'S 35TH CONVENTION APRIL 14 - 19, 2020
- NIAGARA FALLS, NY**

Hosted by: Niagara Clown Alley



REGISTRATION \$ _____

Size _____
Extra Shirts \$20.00 each \$ _____

Size _____

EXTRA BANQUET TICKET \$60.00 EACH \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Make check or money order payable to Niagara Clown Alley and mail to:

Connie Morrow

98 Woodward Drive West Seneca, NY 14224

CONVENTION FEES:

- \$195.00 Vegas Convention Rate
- \$199.00 One Day Only! July 15th, 2019
Mail in forms

MUST BE POSTMARKED JULY 15

- \$220.00 7/16/19 - 10/14/19
- \$240.00 10/15/19 - 4/11/2020
- \$260.00 at the door....cash only!
- \$60.00 DAILY RATE (NO MEALS)
- \$150.00 for JUNIOR JOEYS AND INTERNATIONAL FEES

ALL WORKSHOPS, DEALER'S ROOM, THEME PARTY, HOSPITALITY ROOM, COMPETITIONS, AWARDS BANQUET ENTERTAINERS AND EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

NO CHECKS AT THE DOOR . . . CASH ONLY

\$30.00 CHARGE ASSESSED ON ALL RETURNED CHECKS

\$50.00 PROCESSING FEE FOR CANCELLATIONS BEFORE 02/15/2020

NO REFUNDS AFTER 02/15/2020

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300 3RD STREET NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14303 USA

<https://www.sheratonatthefalls.com>

\$139.32 a NIGHT for SINGLE, DOUBLE, TRIPLE, or QUAD

(RATE IS ALL INCLUSIVE -TAXES, FEES, PARKING, CASINO VOUCHER) TO RECEIVE

CONVENTION DISCOUNT, RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY 02/15/2020 A

MAXIMUM of **4 PERSONS** PER ROOM and AT LEAST ONE ADULT (21 YEARS OF AGE

OR OLDER) IS REQUIRED FOR EACH ROOM **BE SURE TO MENTION THE CODE!**

****Please DO NOT book your hotel room until the code is announced**

in the Calliope or Online

PLEASE COMPLETE ONE FORM FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL REGISTERING:

NAME _____ CLOWN NAME _____ COAI # _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ Zip _____ COUNTRY _____

TELEPHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

IS THIS YOUR FIRST COAI CONVENTION? YES NO ALLEY AFFILIATION _____

Updates and information: "Conventions" tab at www.MyCOAL.com Questions? Jim Donoughe at 1-716-471-3684 or Email COAICov2020@aol.com



Panther Hat

By Patricia "Pockets" Bunnell



1. Inflate a pink 260, leaving a five-finger tail. Make a two-finger bubble followed by two three-finger bubbles. Twist the two large bubbles together.
2. Twist the nozzle in between the two larger bubbles.
3. Form a two-finger bubble, a half-inch bubble, and finish with

- a two-finger bubble. Twist together. This becomes an eye/ear combo.
4. Make another eye/ear combo. Pinch-twist the half-inch bubbles to form its ears. Set aside.
5. Inflate a pink 260, leaving a five-inch tail. Form four eight- to nine-inch bubbles. Tie together to form a diamond. Discard remaining balloon.
6. Form a three-finger bubble for a neck. Twist in at the top of the diamond.



7.



8.



9.



10.



11.



12.

7. Form a three- to four-inch bubble for its body. Twist the diamond in half and insert the tail of the body into the diamond. Twist the tail around the top of the diamond.

8. Add artwork.

9. To form a hat base, fully inflate two 260s. Burp and tie off. Make two eighteen-inch bubbles. Offset the two bubbles and twist together.

10. Form loops out of the remaining balloons.

11. Make a three-finger bubble and twist in at the top of one of the loops.

12. Form a five- to six-inch bubble for the body. Twist in at the top of the other loop. 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.





From the Membership Director

Carrie "Shimmy Giggles" Ray

Hello, Members!

Elections are right around the corner, so please take the time to vote for your next board members. Your vote matters! We have a few positions that are still open, so please consider being on our board. We need you! If you are interested, please contact President Mike Cox.

Don't forget that it's time to start planning for International Clown Week (August 1-7). Start sending out letters to your city to request proclamations. Start making or ordering the giveaways that you will be handing out, such as red noses, painted rocks, and brochures. Start making or ordering the signs you will be using during Clown Week. Assign tasks to your team if your Alley is going after the Charlie Award. Set up a meeting with your Clown Week team to discuss responsibilities and tasks.

I can't believe that Easter is right around the corner. I found the book, *The Clown Egg Register*, by Luke Stephenson and Helen Champion, on Amazon. You should definitely buy it! The descriptions states, "Step right up for the Greatest Book on Earth! For more than seventy years, Clowns International—the oldest established clowning organization—has been painting the faces of its members on eggs. Each one is a record of a clown's unique identity, preserving the unwritten rule that no clown should copy another's look. This mesmerizing volume collects more than 150 of these portraits, from 1946 to the modern day, accompanied by short personal histories of many of the clowns. Here are Tricky Nicky, Taffy, Bobo, Sammy Sunshine, the legendary Emmett Kelly, and Jolly Jack, clowning since 1977 and still performing today with a penguin puppet named Biscuit. A treasure just like the eggs it enshrines, *The Clown Egg Register* is an extraordinary archive of images and lives of the men and women behind the make-up." I found it very interesting and loved the idea of the book.

I was inspired by the book and thought it would be fun to have a Clown Easter Egg Decorating contest. Here are the rules:

The eggs must be decorated like a clown character.

Each egg must have a name.

All entries must include a short description (1-2 paragraphs) of the egg.

The judges will award prizes in the following categories:

Funniest Looking Egg

Most Unique Egg

Most Colorful Egg

Overall Most Attractive Egg

The winners will be announced at the Convention. Each will receive a certificate, medal, and be highlighted in the next *Calliope*. The overall winner will receive a trophy.

Tips and Tricks for the Clown Easter Egg Decorating Contest:

Make it funny! Yes, you need puns! The judges might have a busy day, and though we may be impressed with your artwork, we also like to smile. Make us all smile and laugh with your egg. Include lots of egg puns when you name your egg (eggcellent, eggstatic, eggxplorer, eggcited, egghead, cracked eggs, scrambled eggs, fried eggs, etc.).

Using good quality paints can make a big difference to the finished look. Make sure you embellish your egg and blow the judges away.

Plan ahead and take your time. Planning ahead will allow you to have fun with your creation, and you will have time to think through all the funny details you can add.

Finally, remember that your egg doesn't have to be super complicated to win. It just needs to wow the judges.

If you need help or have questions, contact me at (214) 577-6002. **TNC**



CHARLIE AWARD EVALUATION

Alley: _____ (E=25, YG=15, G=10, F=5, (-), P=0)

Name: _____

Alley or Individual: _____

Individual: _____

Comments: _____

SCORE: _____

1. Proclamations: (if submitted? _____) _____

2. Newspaper Articles / Press Releases (announcements, event coverage, letters of appreciation, etc.) _____

3. Events Information (alley participants, dates, times, types) _____

4. Pictures (posed vs. action, clowns) with audience, very promotional depiction of Clown Week? _____

5. Content (creativity, arrangement, organization, quality, etc.) _____

Overall Comments: _____ Total Score: _____

Judge Initials: _____



CLOWN COMICS

PLAY BALL!

By Ann "Tuttles" Sanders

★ Stage Manager: Harold "Ducky" Wood. Starring: Ann "Tuttles" Sanders, Kathy "Sparkles" McPherson, Jeremy "Dilly" Manning, Jerry "Dr. Dufus" Dodson, Evelyn "Giggles" Smith, and Courtney "Dally" Harris. Kolonial Klowns of Williamsburg - Alley #357

Photos by Tim "Sawdust" Laynor





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