

Grease Paint

January 2020



A Fantastic Start

The drama department of Rock Island High School has the troupe scheduled for a presentation on January 23rd. Times need to be set up and confirmed yet. The students are interested in the potentials of clowning.

A student stopped by our clown class last year and asked us to speak with the drama teacher. She felt some of the students would be interested in clowning. A contact was made and the two key points that caught their attention were:

1. Not all students can take part in productions. The potentials of clown walk-around and preshow, intermission, and audience warm-ups could involve everyone.
2. They seemed to enjoy the idea of writing, directing and producing their own skits.

This could be the start of bringing younger clowns into the troupe. And, if one high school gets involved it is only a matter of time before others will too.

We will be working up a team to make this presentation. A brochure has been designed we will leave with them. A few clown pictures will be shared and we will talk about skits. Other activities, such as walk-arounds and senior center visits will also be covered.

Keep your fingers crossed for a good presentation. And, look for some new younger clowns in the troupe this year.

2020 Leadership: Officers and board members for the year 2020.

RIHS Drama Class: A presentation that might bring in some new members.

QCCT Show: Calling all clowns and entertainers. Get ready for “show time”.

Skit Book: Skits will be published and available during our meetings.

A Word from Our President: Jane welcomes the new year with 2020 plans for the troupe.

A Terrible Event: Problems and other situations can come up during events. How we can learn from them.

Two Years of Grease Paint: Both 2018 and 2019 monthly issues of Grease Paint will be available for sale.

Infantry Skit: A play on words sight gag using military and a small tree.

Scams: Be aware of these and protect yourself.

2020 Leadership

Here are the officers and board members for 2020. A few names carried over from 2019. All are looking forward to working with the clown troupe to help take it to the next level.

President: Jane Foust

Vide President: Brian Lees

Secretary: Sue Collins

Treasurer: Jerry Zavitz

Board Members: Dwight Englund

Karin Hanson

Janet Ketelsen

Grease Paint will continue to be published by Brian Lees. Brian will also maintain the clown troupe website. If you have an article or other items you would like published or added to the website, email the information to: topperhtc@yahoo.com.

IL Caring Clowns

We received a contact from an IL senior center. As communications were passed to Karin we learned that the current Caring Clowns component of our troupe is Iowa based. And, their schedule is almost full. They work a group of senior facilities on a regular basis. Karin mentioned she may not have time to do something regularly on the IL side.

Contact was made and calls will take place after the first of the year. However, as a troupe we need to organize a group of Caring Clowns that will be available to work the IL side. I am not saying that a clown cannot work either side of the river. But when we get a request from the IL side, it would be a lot easier if we had a contact in IL to work with.

There is no need to reinvent the wheel. If you are interested, please speak with Karin. She has caring clown information that will help you. Also, be looking for a discussion during our monthly meeting in an attempt to organize clowns to be available in IL.

QCCT Show

Calling all clowns and entertainers. Plans are being made for a production. I use the term production because the goal is a family-based show. Not just a cluster of skits. I am talking about music, skits, magic, and other entertainment. We have clowns that work with puppets. We need someone who is willing to learn and work out a comedy routine with their puppet. Brian can do some magic.

We have clowns that can perform skits. We have talent that play instruments so we could include a few sing-alongs. There are plenty of potentials that would enable us to put on a very good variety show. Plan to include a few safety messages in it as well. The goal is to produce a show that runs about 45 minutes.

We need a lot more participants than the 45 minute time block will allow. As an simple example, if we plan for 10 acts and have a list of 18 potential participants, that would be fantastic. With a larger list of participants than time block we have the flexibility of working better with everyone's schedule.

The show will require rehearsal. It will be approached like a theatrical production. We will first gather a list of performers and their acts. Then we will sit down and select theme music. From there we will build the show sequencing the acts. We need to determine what will be done as a finale. Expect music to be mixed within the show. Some may be background and we might have a few routines choreographed to the music.

We will host a dress rehearsal where pictures and video clips will be taken. Those materials will be used to publish a brochure and perhaps a DVD to promote the show. The focus of the show will be entertainment. If the troupe is paid that would be nice. Remember, we are a 501c3 non-profit organization. That means another business may sponsor us to perform.

The primary audience will be through community service. The show should help get a name and profile out there for the troupe. It will also prompt news attention. This will help boost students for our clown class and overall posture the troupe as a high quality entertainment organization.

More discussion will take place after the first of the year. Brian will initially lead this project. But he will not be the only person involved. More people are expected to get involved with both performing and the production. We will need stage hands, clowns that are willing to showcase some of their individual talents as well as skit teams.

As one might say "it is time to dust off those dancing shoes, stand up and fill your dance cards".

A Word from Our President

Happy New Year from your new QC troupe president! I'm Jane Foust, also known as Daisy, and I've been a member of the troupe for about a year and a half now. Right now, I'm very honored and very humbled to be voted into this position. With Brian's support, I will do my best to lead this wonderful group of clowns.

From the day I walked into the clown class that summer day, I was impressed how friendly and welcoming everyone was. Throughout my first year as a clown, everyone was so helpful, giving me ideas about costuming, props, and learning clown skills. I'm still learning. Brian did a wonderful job of planning activities such as balloon twisting, face painting, props, puppetry, and skits. Now that we have learned the basics, I would like to offer more opportunities to work on these skills. Last year was more whole group instruction; this year can be more individual practice and learning from each other.

January is a month of resolutions, and I challenge (especially the new clowns) to make a resolution, to learn one new skill, make one new prop, or an addition to your costume. I resolve to learn at least 5 skits and make 4 or 5 new props for walk-arounds. I'm going to offer opportunities at meetings for meeting in small groups. For example, the Caring Clowns might want some time to practice new music; while the Junior Joeys might want to get together and learn some skits.

Also, I would like to begin putting together some type of library of materials that the new clowns could check out and learn not only new skills, but more about the history of clowning. If we had some DVD's of some of the old performances, we could do a popcorn and movie night. It would be nice if some of the clowns we haven't seen in a while could come and join us that night. For that matter, visitors are always welcome.

As a troupe we need to make some resolutions for the next year. We've talked about growing the troupe. We've talked about developing a variety show. At the first meeting in January, I hope to come up with a plan for doing this. There are also a few other projects we need to start planning.

Most of all, I'm going to make a resolution to really appreciate and be grateful for each- and -every clown in our troupe. Last year, even though we experienced illness, injuries, and rainy day walk-a-rounds, we managed to have clowns at all our activities. Let's celebrate that we're all still here. I especially appreciate how everyone came together and everyone played a part in the clown



class last summer. We each have our own unique talents, and when we work together, we really rock.

I hope this year is one of the best ever. Remember to always be kind, and I'll see you in 2020.

A Terrible Event

You started to make balloons but every other balloon popped as you were working with it. Two kids are anxious for you to pain their faces. One tries to push the other out of line so she can be first. Mom is no where around and the kids are reaching into your pockets taking out things.

You decide to do some sponge magic. One person knows all the tricks and ruins it for everyone. You decide to try something different and drop the sponge. Another child picks it up and runs away with it. Anything and everything that could go wrong, did. Events like this we look forward to getting in our car and driving home.

The further we drive the more relaxed we become. Worse clowning day ever. Just forget it and let it go. It will never happen again—or will it? Those events and be some of the most important in terms of your clowning skills.

Sit down with note paper and make a list of everything that happened. Were there any warning signs you missed? Was there something you could have done different? How did you work through the situation? All these questions help you prepare for the next situation. There will always be new problems that come up. But the more we can identify them and generate ideas to work through them the better our clowning will be.

Some of those bad situations and problems can become the best learning tools. But we will only learn from them if we take the time to write out what happened and our response. Do not be surprised if you come up with a few more suggestions. It is always easier to come up with ideas when there is no pressure.

The problems may not be your own. If you notice another clown having to work through bad situations you can make notes of them too. Perhaps the two of you can meet later and talk about what could have been done. A true value of an entertainer, regardless amateur or professional, is how well they work through those situations.



2 Years of Grease 2018 and 2019

All issues from January 2018 through December 2019 are now available on one CD. The files are in PDF format, the same as distributed through email and the website. PDF files can be opened and read on all types of computers. The PDF format is considered the most versatile for file sharing.

The cost of the CD is \$5.00. A limited number has been published. But, do not read that statement as a "limited time only" comment. Additional CDs will be published as ordered. The price of the CD does not include postage.

Place your order by speaking with Brian or sending email to: topperhtc@yahoo.com.

NOTE: The 2019 newsletters are still available on the website: qcclowns.com. However, beginning with the posting of the February newsletter, those files will be removed.

Skit Book

Skits will be published and passed out during our meetings. They will be single pages and you may want to pick up a binder and 3 hole punch. You can hole punch them and keep them in the binder. We need to start building our skit inventory once again. Rather than publish a new skit book every time we add new skits, they will be provided single page for the members to file.

The skits may also be distributed as attachments to the troupe email. You can also use the binder to make/keep your personal notes and or the list of materials you need to perform. This should make troupe functions easier. Members may not have to meet and run through the skits. They have the option of calling each other, opening their skit book and talking through them.

Look for skit distribution to begin soon.

Infant Tree Skit

BACKGROUND: This is a play on words, sight gag. As spoken, with tone of voice and gestures, the word “infant tree” sounds like it refers to the military. But the sight gag blow off identifies the term as a small, baby tree.

PROPS: Small tree, baby blanket and a baby bottle.

SET UP: Clown doing the sight gag blow off hides off stage, out of sight. First clown walks out in front of the audience and begins the dialogue.

PERFORMANCE: First clown walks on excited. The clown begins to share the news that the infant tree is coming. The clown tells the audience that the infant tree has never come by this way before. This is going to be so exciting. I can hardly wait.

Clown glances off stage in the direction of the second hiding clown. Turns back to the audience and ask if anyone has seen the infant tree. The clown said he used to dream about it but never saw it before. They must be getting closer now.

Clown glances off stage again and gets excited. Pointing off stage he announces to the audience he can see it in the distance. The infant tree is coming closer. This is going to be so much fun. I am so excited.

Clown glances off stage again and says they are just about here. Looking at the audience he tells them to get their cameras ready. The infant tree will be here any minute.

Clown glances off stage the last time and quickly runs to the middle of the stage in front and tell the audience the infant tree is here. Here it is.

Second clown walks on holding the baby tree in the blanket. The second clown carries the baby bottle and offers some drink to the tiny tree.

First clown asks the audience for a round of applause for the infant tree. Second clown motions the audience to be quiet and tells them it is about time for the infant tree’s nap.

Special thanks to Jillyan for performing this with me during the troupe’s holiday party. It was a lot of fun and the troupe enjoyed it.



Insurance

Here we go again. Did someone just mention insurance? A lot of clowns feel insurance is a waist of money. Pay the premium for a piece of paper that you never have a problem where insurance is needed. If a clown only performs part time, is insurance really needed?

The harsh truth is that insurance is a double edged sword. Many performers carry insurance. They have for many years and never have filed a claim. Yet, they still renew their coverage year after year. They continue to have insurance as they do not want to face the problems associated without coverage.

At an event, a balloon was made for a child. The parent took it, handed it to the child, smiled and said thank you. She no sooner turned around than the child put the balloon in his mouth. When he bit the balloon popped. A small piece of rubber flew into the child's mouth. He coughed a little and the piece came out.

Mom looked at the clown and the clown handed her his card. "Here is my card. I am covered with insurance. If there is a problem please contact me." Mom took the card but a call was never received. The next event the clown recognized mom and asked her if the boy was ok. She said he was fine. She also mentioned that no one else had given her a card telling her they carried insurance.

There was not a problem. But if that piece lodged in the boy's throat and he had to go to the emergency room, you can bet mom would be looking for the clown to pay the bills. The clown may have told mom "don't let him put that in his mouth" when he handed her the balloon. But that is his word against mom. Regardless the outcome, do you really want that kind of situation?

Granted, that example is extreme. But the truth is that anything can happen. The cost of insurance coverage, compared to potential problem costs is very reasonable. And, the cost of insurance is an annual expense. The key is to belong to a national organization such as WCA, COAI, etc. They have group insurance coverage at very reasonable rates.

If you belong to more than one organization be sure to check insurance coverage/costs with all of them. You will have at least two expenses. One will be the membership of the national organization. The second expense will be the cost of the insurance. For both, they will be an annual expense. Once you pay it, there are no more charges until next year.

Insurance is just the right thing to do. If you are not covered please think about it. It only takes one situation going bad to cause problems. With insurance, the financial impact of those problems is handled.

Scams

The holidays and first of the year are prime times for scammers. Never use phone numbers that are provided by the email you might receive. As an example, three emails are going around that say your account has been restricted or locked. They want you to call a phone number to unlock it. DO NOT use that number. Take out your credit card and call the customer service number on the back. Or, look up the phone number yourself and call them.

Amazon email is being sent. It might say your order is shipping or to call due to a problem on your account. Again, do not use that phone number. Look up Amazon's customer service's number yourself. Or, use the customer service number on the back of your Amazon card.

Social Security NEVER communicates by telephone. You may get a voice message or a call from what claims to be the Social Security Administration. Ignore that call. Block it if you have blocking software. The Social Security Administration only communicates by mail. If they need you to contact then the letter will ask you to visit the local administration office.

There are other things to be aware of. Before you use your credit card at the gas pump, it is a good idea to see if there is a "shell" inserted over the card slot. It allows your card to be read by the pump. But it also has a chip inside the shell that records your credit card information. The same holds true if you are using an ATM machine.

When you pay with a credit card at the store watch those around you. I was shopping at a department store and noticed that they had a sign asking people to wait for the next register. There was a person that ignored the sign and was standing right behind the customer. The customer went to use her credit card and I walked up and asked him to move back.

He looked at me as if I was trying to cut in line. I told the clerk and customer to hold off until he was back away from being able to watch her enter her pin. The guy rolled his eyes at me and stepped back. Another time I watched a man use one finger and enter his number without any hesitation of where he positioned his hands. I could tell you his pin number from standing as the fifth person in line.

The holidays, and poor economy seem to bring out the worse in terms of identify theft. We are responsible for safeguarding our own information. However, the warnings we share today are the safety messages for our friends tomorrow. Never try to outsmart a scammer. Hang up, or walk away.

Be safe. Do not give anyone access to your private information.





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