

Grease Paint

February 2020



Repair and Replace

The clowning calendar often slows down after the first of the year. This is a good time to do some maintenance on your costume and props.

Time to sew that pesky button that keeps falling off. Safety pins can come out and costumes mended. If you need to drop off the dry-clean parts of your costume, this is a good time to do that.

If you work with a puppet, don't forget it. A few repairs may be in order. Perhaps the costume needs a good wash. Or you might be thinking of adding another outfit. The slow season is the time to do that.

Props get bumped and nicked as they are carried around. This is a good time to touch them up. If the prop is black and you do not want to paint consider trying a Sharpie. A lot of scratches and nicks can be touched up with it.

If you want to add a new prop or pocket magic to your working inventory, this is a great time. Pick it up while you have time to practice. You might need to spend time practicing in front of a mirror. You may also talk with other members and get ideas for using it.

Finally, those items you use but are just too far gone to repair or touch up, need to be replaced. You already are familiar with the item so you should be able to shop around to find the best price.

Robocall Epidemic: Things you can do when you receive them.

Jokes/One Liners: A few jokes and one liners you can use during walk-around.

Noses: Different clown noses and application. Find the nose that works best for you.

Clown Troupe Goal: Goals were set for the troupe. We also set goals for our self.

High School Drama Depts: A presentation was done locally. This could become a good source to bring in new clowns.

Special Delivery: A lecture coming up on performance. A "dress rehearsal" will be scheduled and the troupe is welcome to attend at no charge.

Bad Referral: What to do when asked about a clown you do not feel comfortable recommending.

Robocall Epidemic



We are living through a robocall epidemic. The sad thing is that there is not much we can do about it. It is frustrating for everyone. It seems you are in the middle of doing something, or in a quiet area and all of a sudden your cell phone rings. Thinking it might be important you look at it and the area code is one you do not recognize.

I do not have to remind anyone the problems with these calls. But I can share some information you have to work with them. The government is trying to shut them down but we know that will fail. Close one robocall business on Monday and they change name and open under a different name Tuesday morning.

We have to take action. The first action is not to answer any call that you do not recognize. If the call is important they will leave voice mail. Keep that in mind when you call someone. If they do not answer, leave a voice message. Robocalls are getting worse every day. It is up to us to find ways to block them. If I do not answer your call leave me a message. I will call you back.

There are apps you can download to your phone. Before you install one I suggest you speak with your cell phone carrier. I had one downloaded and it turned out to be one that took up a lot of memory and was not that effective. Verizon recommended Hiya. They have two versions one is free, which I use. The other is a monthly charge.

When those unrecognized calls come in, Hiya has a small screen that pops up warning me number is suspected of spam, robocall or a dept collector. I let the call go to voice mail and open up my received calls. If they did not leave voice message I click on it and Hiya gives me a prompt to block their future calls.

Do not answer the automated robocall. If you do, the system will flag your number as one that is answered. That seems to more than triple the number of robocalls you will receive. It is best, if you have a silence button, to use that when the calls comes in and just let it run into voice mail. Rejecting the call could flag your number as being responded to. Just let it go.

Again, please remember, if you call someone and it goes to voice mail, leave a message. You may not need them to call you back. You can say that. But at a minimum give your name and the reason you called. Many times the individual is close to the phone and will check the message. When they get your message they will call you back.

Jokes/One Liners

40 is the new 30, try telling that to a speed camera

A friend just text me asking what idk means. I said "I don't know" and his response was "OMG, no one knows".

Towels are the biggest cause of dry skin.

Chocolate comes from Coco which is a tree. That makes it a plant, therefore it is a salad.

Dentists make money from people who have bad teeth. Why should I trust the tooth paste they recommend?

Don't worry if plan A fails. There are 25 more letters in the alphabet.

Though I have gone bald I keep the comb I have had for 25 years. I just cannot part with it.

Hold that pose, my camera is ringing.

I changed my password to "Incorrect". Now whenever I forget, the computer tell me: Your password is incorrect.

I either get what I want or I change my mind.

I painted a blue square in my back yard. I want people viewing Google Earth to think I have a swimming pool.

One day in school my teacher asked me to name two pronouns. I replied "Who, me?"

I stayed up all night once to see where the sun went then it dawned on me.

I used to be afraid of the dark. Now I'm terrified about my electric bill.

Been thinking of getting rid of my old vacuum cleaner. Its just collecting dust.

If Apple were to make a car, would it have Windows?

If I made a belt out of watch straps, would that be a waist of time?

If your on a roll, your probably not headed up hill.

Noses

Clown noses come in a wide variety of styles and applications. The key to a good clown nose is one that fits, is comfortable and gives you the wear ability you need. The basic structures are a string, or one that glues on with an adhesive. There was one clown, Humphry, that used a plastic nose. He flexed it a little and it sat on his nose. It worked well for him.

A string nose has a line that runs from one edge of the nose, around the back on your head and it attached on the other edge. The line can be invisible filament, a string or something you are comfortable with. Remember, if you are using a line that is bright you can always apply some of your base makeup to the line itself.

The major goal of a glue on nose is the fit. It needs to be snug and allow facial movement. The nose can be a simple small tip, a full covering nose or a kind of a bubble, often referred to as an Auguste nose. One thing you need to do, when you find one that is a good fit, is to make note of it. If there is a stock number or size on it, write that down.

If you selected a glue on nose your next choice is an adhesive. The most popular is a product called "Pro Nose Glue". However some clowns use Spirit Gum. Follow directions or ask for suggestions. You don't just smear the adhesive and stick the nose on. The adhesive needs a little time to tack up.

If you use "Pro Nose Glue" you need to coat the nose then set it in place and immediately take it back off. Let both surfaces tack up and then apply the nose. Think of it as setting the adhesive and then joining the adhesives together. Hold the nose in place a couple minutes and it should be set for you to perform.

It has been suggested you use grease paint to paint a red tip on your own nose. If your nose comes off you still will have some red color on your nose. Or, carry a tube of red lipstick. Use that if your nose comes off.

It is common for some moisture to form under the nose. As long as the adhesive still holds that is ok. Some are able to bend over and gap the lower part of their nose to let the moisture drain out. If not, then just get used to performing with a small puddle on the end of your nose.

The last important thing I will mention is to be sure to use moisturizer. It takes some aggressive product and agitation to remove the adhesive. Be sure to get a quality moisturizer on that harsh skin once that nose comes off.

Clown Troupe Goal

The first meeting in January sticky notes were passed around. We were asked to write down a couple goals for this year. One goal was for our personal clowning. The second goal was one that we wanted to achieve as a troupe.

There were a lot of very good goals. One goal for the troupe echoed almost unanimously from the notes that were turned in. We all want to see new members joining our clown troupe. A brief discussion took place and we came up with a goal of 5 new members by July 1st. That is only 1 new member per month.

We also discussed other important elements for that goal. One was that we need to host the program first and the business meeting later. Two primary reasons were brought up. First, and probably the most important, is that we get people involved in clowning activities. That is the reason we joined. So, it is best to get to the fun activities first.

The second reason was that students that might wish to join may have other obligations. The term “homework” came up. If we run the program first, those who need to leave can. Prior to the business meeting we might discuss upcoming events so people are aware of them. But the bulk of the business will take place after the program.

Now comes the challenge. We need to get potential new members to come to our meetings. The best way is to invite anyone who might be interested. The second is to reach out to other organizations that might respond. The drama class at Rock Island High School asked the troupe for a presentation late in January.

Do not hesitate in speaking with other groups you might think would like someone to stop by and give a presentation. The goal is 1 new member per month. We all have to work towards that goal. If you have trouble approaching someone, the troupe has cards you can pass out. Just ask Brian for some.

Let’s make 2020 a year we expand our clown troupe. There will always be room for clowns to get involved with our caring clown teams. Parades and community walk-around events will begin scheduling soon. Bring any ideas of how we can market the clown troupe with you to our meetings.

One new member per month is very reasonable and attainable. We just have to roll up our sleeves and get the word out.

High School Drama Departments

Drama departments in our school systems may be a nest to invite new clowns to our meeting. Brian made a presentation to the Rock Island High School Drama Department last month. The keys that caught their attention were participation and their own material.

When the school performs a play/musical there are only so many parts that students can take. Usually not everyone is involved. The next quest is for stage hands. But, you can only use some many hands before they begin to step on each other. Many departments use other students for set design and to help sell tickets. But that is not the same as being involved in the production.

Students may be interested in walk-around clowning before the show begins. Or, a short pre-show might be done as an audience warm up. Do not forget the potentials of clowning during the intermission and a short mini show to begin the second half. This approach opens the doors for all students to get involved.

Another key incentive is they can write, direct and produce their own skits. As you might suspect there will be a few students who are curious and receptive to clowning. They may come to a meeting to learn more. This approach will not appeal to every student. But the potentials are there for more students to get involved.

If you have friends in school, you might want to mention the clown troupe to their drama department. The presentation is short on clown history. The types are mentioned. Then the emphasis is on our community service and activities we do as clowns. Time permitting a simple balloon will be demonstrated, a couple skits done and a lot of time open for questions and answers.

NEXT CHALLENGE: Once we attract new members we need to keep our meetings interesting enough they will want to return. We started that by hosting the program first and the business meeting after. That way our guests can get into clowning hands on and not be bogged down with our business. It also allows students who may have homework to leave early.

If we can get one school involved, others should become interested. Count the high schools in the area and that translates into a good sized group to approach. Some schools may not be interested. But those who are is an open invitation to welcome potential new troupe members to our meetings.

Improv

Improvisation, or improv, is a form of live theatre in which the plot, characters and dialogue of a game, scene or story are made up in the moment. Often improvisers will take a suggestion from the audience, or draw on some other source of inspiration to get started.

The Internet dictionary gives us a good definition of improv. Clowns depend on it. Some are able to use it without problems. Others are hesitant. There is a fear of just reacting without practice or a scare other clowns will not follow along. These fears are natural. It is important to know who you are working with. Two clowns that are scared of improv with each other will have a harder time than a hesitant clown working with one who is more experienced.

The fact is that improv can add so much to the entertainment. Take a step back and look at others. Often people working on stage will take a tip from someone in the audience. Or, they react and interact with others. Other entertainers will take a cue from the surroundings. Looking at a nursery rhyme picture on the wall and mixing it up with another story always gets some attention:

“I remember this one. This is where Jack and Jill go up the hill to buy tickets to the soccer game.” (Any child near you will speak up to correct you.)

Many times you can key in on something around and play off it. You might see a bingo card or pick up on the bingo in a conversation. That is a key to get involved. “I play bingo but I never win.” I have my own card but they never call any “Rs”. So I never get to yell Binger. Brian has also walked into a bingo game and between games yelled “R 97”. When people look around he asks if anyone has a Binger.

Improv often begins with a simple exercise. As you go through your day look for things that might spark improv. Checking out at the grocery store? Can you imagine trying to carry your bags? You start picking them up threading them on your hand and as you turn you leave one on the counter. You pick that one up and put it on your fingers only to leave another when you turn around again.

Try to visualize everyday situations where a little improv could add some comedy. It could be situations, activities, day to day chores or conversations. All it takes is looking around to help generate some ideas.

Special Delivery Lecture

Brian is working on his 2020 lecture series. “Special Delivery” is centered on presentation. The lecture covers projection, blocking, stage presence, timing and other tools needed to work in front of an audience. These tools are equally important for small groups as well as larger stage performances.

The lecture includes overhead projection, demonstration and information designed to meet the individual where he/she is and provide recommendations, ideas and suggestions to take their performance up to the next level.

Primarily targeted to the magic industry, this lecture includes tools that are just as important for clowns. As with any major presentation, it is best to have a few rehearsals before getting into a live situation. Brian is working on a schedule that will allow a presentation locally for his friends. All members of the clown troupe will be invited.



This will be a free lecture. It should be timed out at about an hour. It will be presented in the same posture it will be done live for the entertainment organizations. An announcement will be made during a troupe meeting once the lecture presentation is scheduled. It will also be listed on the website and in the newsletter.

Bad Referrals

Sooner or later there will come a time when you are asked about another clowns entertainment. It is easy to give positive referrals when you know the clown. It is even easier when you have seen the clown perform and are proud to recommend them. But there may be a time when you are asked about a clown you know nothing about, or know they are not a good fit for the event.

No one appreciates bad mouthing. Name calling and downgrading others is never a good thing to do. But the question is how do you respond without giving a false impression? It is best to take a neutral position. I suggest telling the caller you are not familiar with that clown's performance. If they believe you have not watched the clown in action, they will understand why you cannot offer a referral.

I will admit that there are clowns I have no problem with. I welcome any opportunity to work with them. In the past, I have to also admit that there are a small few that I would never want to work with. I am happy to say that those few are no longer with the troupe. So, troupe members can stop worrying about who those clown were.

I answered questions about those few by taking the position I had not watched them perform. The fact is I had and knew I could not give a positive recommendation. But, rather than offer negative comments I chose to take a position I did not know. "I'm sorry but I have not seen (clowns name) in action. We have done a few walk-arounds but I was entertaining myself and could not offer any comments on (clown name).

Taking the "I don't know, have not seen that clown perform" approach has been the best response for me. The caller gets no positive/negative information, the clown is not being bad mouthed and everything seems to work out fine. One time I was asked by the clown who used my name. I just said I have not watched him for a while and said that to the caller. I did not offer good or bad comments. The clown was not happy, but accepted my answer.

You can prevent this problem. If you want to use a clown as a reference, spend some time talking with them. Ask for permission to use them. Talk about what you would like them to represent. Do not let them get blind-sided by a call. You do not have to put words in their mouth, or coach them what to say. Just share some ideas that might make their referral positive.

If you ask a clown and they ask you not to use their name. Accept that. Do not ask why or argue. They are being honest. Perhaps in the future they will change their mind. But for now just be thankful they were honest with you. I like to thank them and add that "I hope some day I earn your referral".

I cannot stress bad mouth negative enough. You may be honest with the caller. But in the end your bluntness and negative comments will come back to haunt you. If you have any question just look at the political commercials. Everyone is bad mouthing. Name calling and other harsh negative comments are the driving factor in many candidates commercials.

Always remember that a "I'm not familiar with his performance" is better than "no " with harsh comments behind that. Pointing fingers and bad mouthing other clowns or entertainers will never fix anything. The only thing it does is respond to the caller and mark you as an individual who is willing to bad mouth someone. The final tally is that bad mouthing to get ahead never pushes anyone to the front. If anything it holds them back.



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