

Grease Paint

April 2021



Website/Facebook Page Content

The push is on. We need content for both the website and Facebook page. It can be as simple as an article on your clowning experience. Maybe you have a prop you made that you want to write about. It could be a review of an event the troupe did.

The challenge with this type of media is keeping fresh, new content. When people view them and they look the same without any new information they become stale. When they reach that posture, people stop looking at them.

Do not think your content has to be long or complex. People like to read information from others than the publisher and page administrator. You would be surprised at what people will enjoy.

If you have a recipe you want to share, please email it to me. I will duplicate it sending to Brian Weckerly, for the Facebook page. Pictures are also welcome. Email your materials to:

topperhtc@yahoo.com

Thank you for your help. If you have something you want to write but want help, contact topper at the email above. He is a "Ghost Writer" for others in other areas. He will be happy to help you.

Zoom Meetings: Plans are being set for Zoom meetings.

One Step Ahead: A simple approach to magic. Getting ahead can make the magic more enjoyable.

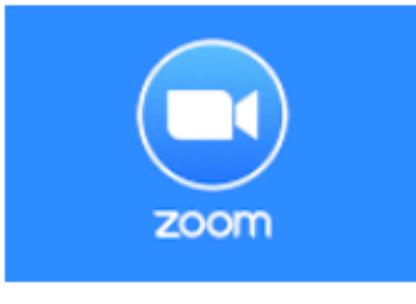
Chuckles Answer Machine: A simple one person routine that anyone can do.

Storytelling: Another activity that clowns can do. Storytelling works well in elementary school libraries and senior centers.

Clown—What Comes To Mind: Results of a short social survey for what people think of when they hear the word clown.

Caring Clowns: The need will never be as strong as it is now.

10 Things to Remember about Noha's Ark



Zoom Meetings

Discussions and decisions are being made on Zoom meetings. Very soon an attempt will be made to run a Zoom session concurrently with a general membership meeting. We have Internet connection at the meeting facility. It has not been determined how reliable or fast that connection will be. That is an experiment that needs to take place yet.

The actual mechanics of who will run the computer and who presents along with picking up on communications from those attending through Zoom is also being considered. At the same time a few Zoom policies are being worked out. One that will impact every meeting is the agenda. Under normal procedure the meeting outline begins with the welcome, a discussion of the minutes and then the Treasurer's report.

The Treasurer's report will not be disclosed to those attending through Zoom. The troupe will not take attendance or validate those participating through Zoom. Guests will openly be invited to attend. Thus no confidential troupe business will be included in any Zoom meeting. This information will be discussed/covered during the meeting for those attending in person. Once the confidential materials are discussed, the meeting will be opened to those attending through Zoom.

The immediate consideration is to hold those attending by Zoom in the lobby or a waiting area. Once the meeting is opened for online viewing they will be brought into the Zoom session. If there are problems or complaints those comments will not be disclosed through Zoom. They will be handled by the attending members, or tabled until they can be discussed during a board meeting.

Board meetings, due to the nature of the subjects, will not be offered through Zoom. If a member must input information by Internet it will be done through a private message session. This is to safeguard the content and yet allow the member not attending to voice their concerns.

Once the final decisions are made an email will be sent out identifying the policies that will be in place during Zoom sessions.

One Step Ahead

There is a performance secret magicians use, that many are not aware of. They get themselves one step ahead of their audience. This works for the large stage illusions as well as the simple pocket magic tricks. Here are some examples:

- SPONGE: A ball is shown in your hand. You use a palm manipulation to make the ball vanish. Pointing to your other pocket you take out the sponge ball. It magically jumped through the air into your pocket. (You use a second ball that is already placed in your pocket.)
- COIN: You show a coin to a person and let them see you place it in your pocket. You make sure they watch it drop and show your hand empty. While you are doing that you pick up a second coin from another pocket with your other hand. You keep that coin hidden as you reach behind their head and show them it dropped out of their ear. (My dad fooled me with this simple trick for years.)

The goal is to have the finished result placed or set up before you get there. As clowns I have played catch with sponge balls. I worked with another clown who had a ball hidden in his hand. I used a palm disappear to pretend to throw the ball to the other clown. He swept the air with his hand and produced the sponge ball he had hidden.

A simple small change bag and be used. One can make a small dog with beads and have that in one chamber. You could show the bag empty. Then pretend to sprinkle magic dust over the bag and produce the dog. The entire concept is to have the final result set up before you get there.

Sometimes you can just set up something and let the audience catch it. I have been known to stick a piece of masking tape on my year. I have worked a long time before someone finally notices and asks about it. I just tell them I am listening to my new tape. Other examples are just as easy.

Wearing two different colored socks often prompts comments. When this happens the best response is that you have another pair just like that at home. If you only wear one glove someone may ask if you lost a glove. Your response would be “no, I found one”.

When thinking about one step ahead, remember you can do it yourself or with a partner. You do not have to set everything up ahead. But if you have a trick or two set ahead you can use it if you wish. Or, you can leave it set up for another time.

Chuckles Answer Machine

This is a single person routine that plays off a telephone answer machine. The clown can have a cell phone, or pretend to be using one. It requires a second voice representing Chuckles, the clown he is calling. He wants to make sure Chuckles knows about the party on Saturday.

When you perform this routine you need to be very selective with the words Chuckles uses. The words I suggest can be done with no movement of the lips. You part your lips a little to allow the sound to come out. If you hold your finger to your lips you will notice that there will be no movement.

Remember the wording I use for Chuckles was picked to perform without lip movement. I know that the phrases are not answer machine exact. But they are close enough the audience will follow along not knowing the difference.

1st Clown tells the audience there is a big party this Saturday and he wants to make sure his friend, Chuckles, knows about it.

1st Clown: (Pretends to dial, looks at the audience and says it's ringing.)

Chuckles Voice: Hello this is Chuckles. I can not take your call now. Talk at the tone. Deet.

1st Clown: Hey Chuckles this is (clown name). There is a big party.....

Chuckles Voice: Click.

(I use the words deet and click as it represents the tone and hang up. There will be no lip movement by using these words.)

1st Clown: Looks at audience and says that it didn't give him a chance to leave the message. Tells the audience he will try again. (Pretends to dial and call once more) Again, he tells the audience it is ringing.

Chuckles Voice: Hello this is Chuckles. I can not take your call now. Talk at the tone. (This time there is no tone.)

1st Clown: Keeps waiting for the tone. When no tone is heard he begins to leave his message once again. Pausing for a moment he hears the click.

The 1st clown looks at the audience and says that was strange. There was no tone and it

hung up on me. Let me try this one last time. (Pretends to dial and tells the audience it is ringing)

Chuckles Voice: Hello this is Chuckles. I can not take your call now. Talk at the tone. Deet, click.

1st Clown very frustrated: This time it didn't give me a chance to leave a message.

(1st Clown says ring, again with no lip movement.)

1st Clown: Looks at his phone and tells the audience it is Chuckles calling back. He answers saying hello.

Chuckles Voice: This is Chuckles. Sorry I missed your call.

1st Clown: Begins to tell him about the party on Saturday. While he is talking he hears:

Chuckles Voice: Talk at the tone. Deet, click.

1st Clown: Looking very confused tells the audience I guess his answer machine will not let me leave a message. Hope he comes to the party., and walks off stage.



Storytelling

Clowns do not always have to do silly magic, make balloons, face paint, or act out funny skits. Some clowns enjoy the art of storytelling. This has worked best in elementary libraries and senior centers. The clown sits while people gather around and reads or tells stories.

Using our clown character we can exaggerate some of the words and phrases. We can laugh out loud and prompt others to interact with the story. Pending the ages of your audience you may get into conversations. Don't be surprised if while reading the "Three Little Pigs" to young children you get off track. It will not take long for one child to correct you.

I remember during a walk-around at an elementary school I found some pictures of nursery rhymes on the wall. I looked at a picture of Jack and Jill telling the children I remembered that story. That was when Jack went up the hill looking for his lost lamb. He found Mary who was watching the lamb as they were playing with the jump rope.

It didn't take long for a little girl to start correcting me. She made a correction and I would begin from there and mess it up again. She actually had me sit down and she told me the entire story. I admitted I really had it confused and thanked her for helping me.

There are some storytellers who enjoy sitting down and telling stories. They usually use different expressions and often react as they talk. They might mention something that is funny and laugh out loud themselves. They know how to add suspense with their voice tone, and volume.

Patty Pockets was an active clown troupe member. She enjoyed reading to the younger children. She usually let them pick out the book and she read it to them. There were times when she would point to a word and have a child read it. She spent a lot of time interacting with the children. She never missed a chance to inject a few safety messages as she performed.

Begin by contacting the local libraries. Some like to set up reading days for children in their kids center. This is a great opportunity to clown. That can branch out to other school libraries and community events. There will always be a thirst to get children involved with reading. And storytelling goes hand-in-hand with it.

I have a friend who did an hour at a senior center impersonating Mark Twain. He spoke with a drawl, dressed in an old suit, wore a fedora, walked with a cane. He talked about Huck Finn and told other riverboat stories. The seniors loved it. Consider adding storytelling to your clowning activities.

The stories can be about the circus. One could make a nice story about an elephant that loved cotton candy. I bet you could spin a good story about a young boy's first circus experience.

If you work with a puppet you can use storytelling as a way of communicating. The puppet can interact by nodding its head, shaking yes or no, looking up at you then out to the audience. One of the keys to working with puppets is giving the puppet a character. Storytelling with a puppet is one way to build character into the puppet.

Archie Campbell, one of the actors on "Hee Haw", told a funny story about Sleeping Beauty. Except he called it Bleeping Sleuty. That is not a misprint. He traded some of the letters in the story. The original story began as: "A long time ago in a foreign country there lived a beautiful princess" His version began: "A tong lime ago, in a coreign fountry there lived a princifful beautress". You can still find Archie's Bleeping Sleuty story, searching the Internet.

Andy Griffith told a funny story: "What it was, was football". He took a game that everyone could relate to and twisted a funny story around it. With a little research one can find many examples where every day stories or events were told from a different point of view. There is no reason a clown could not tell stories as part of his/her entertainment.

Clown—what comes to mind?

A question was posted on social media asking what the first thing that came to mind when a person heard the word clown. Here are the results:

Funny Smiles Nose Balloons Big Shoes Bozo Circus Funny costumes Red hair

Funny stories puppets Cream pies Falling pants White face Red Skelton Laughs

This was a short post that brought in a lot of answers. If you look at this list the words are all about the appearance. A couple names were mentioned as well as the Circus. But no one mentioned anything about the clown character, specific activity, or the detail of the clown's makeup or costume.

This speaks loud to members who may feel they are not real clowns. There is nothing about the person saying they are not creative. No one associates the word clown with someone who only goes through the motions. We all are good clowns in our own way. What you may be good at, others may not. You may not be good at some things others are. But in the end we are all clowns in the eyes of the public.

Caring Clowns

This is one of the most important and often demanding needs in any community. The Quad City Clown Troupe has a strong team that work in this area. There are many sources one can learn from. Worldclown.com is the website for the World Clown Association. You can access the website and find information. One does not have to be a member to read this material.

There are other sources out there. One that was recently discovered was Caring Clowns International. Their website is: <https://www.careingclownsinternational.org>. Another source is Bumper T Caring Clowns. That website is: <https://bumpertcaringclowns.org>. One can also get a lot of information from Mooseburger.com.

One should not limit themselves to only once source. There are plenty on the Internet. Do not forget to check the local library for more information. When you connect with those Internet sources you also have other clowns you can contact. Many ideas, suggestions, and questions have been answered through those contacts.

The pandemic helped emphasize the need for caring clowns. More and more clowns are starting to entertain in this area. The need will never be as strong as it is today. Consider the situations:

A senior moves into a center, or assisted living environment. Their entire life has shrunk down to the limited furniture and living space they are in.

Someone is in the hospital. Their entire world is limited to the bed and night stand near them.

Their social circle has been reduced to the individual in the bed next to them. Or, they are limited to the friends they can make in the center.

Many seniors in centers are happy. But they still enjoy contact and entertainment from the outside world. Those in the hospital or assisted living appreciate those contacts even more. One does not have to do a lot of complex, complicated, or technical clowning. A clown just has to spend some time in that individual's world.

They appreciate people just spending time with them. You can walk-around, read to them, get into conversations, do some simple clown things, and watch their eyes light up. The time you spend with them makes their day special. Most of the time family waits until an event or holiday. But a clown does not need an excuse to stop by.

10 Important Things to Learn About Noah's Ark

1. Don't miss the boat
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when the Ark was built.
4. Don't listen to critics. Just go on with the job that needs to be done.
5. Build your future on high ground.
6. Always travel in pairs for those long trips.
7. Speed isn't always an advantage. The Snails were on board with the Cheetahs.
8. Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
9. When you are stressed, relax and float for a while.
10. No matter the storm, there is always a rainbow waiting.





Grease Paint is published monthly as a PDF download. Distribution is made through the Quad City Clown Troupe website: qcclowns.com, and the troupe's email system. Articles contained herein are the creation of the editor, or submissions by the individuals listed as the article's author. The distribution listing is the private property of Grease Paint, and not available beyond the editorial office.

Articles are welcome from contributors. Two documents need to be submitted by email. The first would be the article itself. The second would be a document that specifies: Grease Paint is authorized to publish and that no compensation will be paid. The individual will be recognized as the author and a short bio will be included.

Send articles and the release documents as PDF files to:

topperhtc@yahoo.com.

NOTE: Grease Paint is openly published on the Quad City Clown Troupe's website. To access the website, direct your browser to: qcclowns.com. At the end of the year all issues of Grease Paint are made available on CD for purchase. Because of this open distribution, articles received without the supporting release documents will not be published.