

Grease Paint

April 2019



RI Parks/Recreation Dept

The Quad City Clown Troupe partners with the Rock Island Parks and Recreation Department. We agree to work a few of their events. In turn, we have access to our meeting room at no charge.

This year the troupe will walk-around during the Easter Egg Hunt at Lincoln Park on April 13 from 8:30 until 10:00. We will also walk-around at a "Back to Pool" bash on June 3rd at Whitewater Junction in Long View Part, Rock Island.

The Red, White and Boom event at Schwebert's park is on the schedule again this year on July 4th. The last bash will be a "Back to School" be back at Whitewater Junction July 29th.

We have also been invited to provide one-hour entertainment at the Adventure Summer Camp which is held back in Lincoln Park in Rock Island.

The troupe will also be looking into craft fairs and other events. The effort will be to trade a display area in exchange for walk-around. This would be a public awareness event of the troupe as well as an attempt to attract some new members.

Marketing is an important challenge for us this year. If you think of other areas the troupe can attract some new members, please speak with one of the board members. We want to make this the year of the clown. And, we hope to add a few new faces to our alley.

Working with Makeup:

Warm makeup is easier to work with.

Nose Problems: What do do if the nose loosens or the string breaks.

Clown Class: Time once again to begin planning our 2019 clown class.

Clown Shoes ??? Take a look at shoes clowns wore for competition. They were not professional clown shoes.

Clown Competitions The real reason clowns compete.

Hare Raising Experience: Special pricing on sponge magic trick.

Productive Dead Air:

There are times when dead air compliment the entertainment.

Your Not a Real Clown:

A different opinion on that comment. Real is in the eyes of the beholder. Not the individual saying that.

Working with Makeup



Temperature has a lot to do with makeup application. If your makeup kit has been sitting out where it is cool the grease paint could be cold. Even the slightest chill can affect application.

Many clowns scoop some makeup into their palms and rub it to warm it up first. This is especially true when working with base. It spreads easier, smooths better and sets up for more durability when applied warm.

For those areas where you are not going to use a lot the same holds true. Though you will not scoop up a bunch to warm in your palm, it will still apply better when warm. I have been known to take my bright colors out and wait for them to warm to room temperature before I begin my makeup.

The other problem some clowns run into is grease paint that has dried up. This happens when you do not use that color for a long time. The best approach is to use your finger and begin massaging it. Sometimes when you work it the grease comes back to life. If that does not happen and you still have chunks you can use a little baby oil.

The key word is little. You only want to moisten the very top layer with the oil. It is almost like you are using the oil to generate warm friction as you massage the grease paint. Be very careful not to use too much baby oil. Too much oil will result in a more serious problem. The last thing you want to do is use so much you break down the chemistry of the grease paint.

You also need to pay attention to your powder. If you use a sock and powder your base aggressively some of the base makeup may bleed onto the sock. Then when you use the same sock to powder white or a bright color the base may affect the colors you are trying to set. I am not saying get a different sock for each color. But a lot of clowns have two. One they use just for base. The second is used for everything else.

Makeup will become a working tool. The more you work with it the easier it becomes. And, the more you learn the techniques that work best for you. When you find the combination and routine that works best for you then that is what you continue to use.

Nose Problems

It is a fantastic day. Kids are laughing and dancing while you walk-around. Parents are getting plenty of pictures. Everyone is enjoying the entertainment. Then, without any warning, you feel your clown nose start to loosen. Quickly you push it back on but in a few minutes it begins to loosen again. Time to figure out a way to move to a private area and try to fix it.

This has happened to all clowns at one time or another. Those who wear a string nose are not exempt. There have been times when the string broke. Then they are in the same situation with one major difference. A glued nose loosens a little at a time. Break the string on the nose and it is falling immediately.

Those who wear a string nose often paint their own nose with red grease paint. If the string breaks they just put the nose in their pocket and tend to it later. If you use a string nose and do not paint your own nose in the event of a problem, you need to consider doing it. It is a lot easier to put the broken string nose in your pocket and continue then to try to explain your nose broke.

Some clowns carry nose glue in their emergency kits. When this happens they take a break, go to their kit and glue their nose again. If you do not carry an emergency kit with nose glue then you need to carry bright red lipstick. You can always quickly paint your nose with the lipstick.

Just remember that lipstick is not designed for long wear. Wearing on the lips is one thing. Wearing on your nose, where other oils etc. can get to it is something else. You will have to reapply many times before the event is over.

Your nose is one of the primary recognized features of a clown. The ASL (American Sign Language) communication for clown is to pretend to be squeezing a clown nose. When you see someone signing that makes that gesture, the word or reference to clown is in what they are communicating.



Don't just makeup and leave the house. Think about what you can do when these problems happen. Just because your nose begins to come off doesn't mean the event is over. Remember the phrase:

“The show must go on”.

Clown Class June 8th

Time once again to begin planning our clown class. Jane Foust will head the class up this year. She already has plenty of fresh ideas and a tentative schedule drawn up. As was the schedule last year, we will host the one-day class on a Saturday. A date has been tentatively selected, but needs to be coordinated with the Parks Department yet. June 8th has been reserved for our class at the Rock Island Family Athletic Center. (Our meeting room.)

The clown class is designed to meet two primary goals. First we want to continue to share the clowning education with those who are interested. Those attending will get a full range overview of the clown types, history and activities. Makeup and beginning costumes will also be covered. The class is designed to be fun, educational and include plenty of “hands-on” experience.

The second goal is recruiting for the troupe. We hope those attending will consider joining us at our meetings and eventually become members of our clown troupe. We cover a wide range of entertainment within the community from caring clowns (nursing homes and senior centers) to community walk-arounds supporting worthy causes.

The class is being scheduled so those graduating will have the opportunity of joining the troupe in some of the summer parades. New comers will never be left alone. We will always schedule or arrange for an experienced troupe member to clown with them or be nearby.

Now is the time to start making your list. We need to distribute flyers and get the word out to everyone we can. Build a list of community bulletin boards and other sources you could pass out a flyer. Remember to mention the class to your friends and invite them to the class.

As a troupe we need to attract today’s youth to clowning. There are plenty of summer activities they can get involved with. But clowning is a craft that can be shared with all age groups. They learn skills that they will be able to carry with them and position themselves to help with a wide range of needs in the community.

We are also looking for troupe members to help teach and host the class. The room will be decorated with clown pictures and information. Members will be there in makeup and costume. It will be a day packed with fun and education. If you would like to help please let Jane know, or send email to topperhtc@yahoo.com. I will forward your information to her.

Have you listened to the flip side of the record “Send in the clowns”? If you listen close you will here “send in the people who want to learn to become clowns”

Clown Shoes ???

Do not feel you have to have professional clown shoes to entertain. Brian just returned from the WCA convention in Albuquerque and he took a few pictures of clowns standing in line for competition.



Many had professional clown shoes. But there were a bunch who took every day shoes and made them clownish. The red traditional keds and high top sneakers pictured above blended well with their costume. The mules also went well with that clown's costume.



Although sneakers were the popular shoe to work with another had a pair of red flats. She added a green bow to them. Sorry, the picture was too dark to include in the newsletter. But it worked well with her character.

One clown was competing in a clowning up Elf costume. She had large green elf shoes with bells on them. She made a few changes in her voice and the way she walked to emphasize the character.

One person was telling me of a new clown that just was not getting started. The clown had good makeup and a very good starting costume. But when asked why he would not get out and walk-around he responded that he was saving for clown shoes.

As you can see, many clowns do not use clown shoes. This was a competition at a national convention. These clowns didn't think twice about using professional clown shoes. Many could have had them but decided this was the "look" they wanted.

Dig into the back of that closet. Take a trip through the boxes in the attic. Or visit a local second-hand store. I'm sure you will find something you can decorate for clown shoes. Just make sure what you wear is comfortable.



Clown Competitions

Conventions often host competitions. This past WCA convention included makeup, balloon, face painting, parodability, character and skits. The skits competition was divided into single, group and variety acts.

People enter competition for a wide variety of reasons. Some enter to pick up points for being awarded first, second or third. Those points accumulate until they reach a certain level. At that time they are inducted into the Clown Hall of Fame. But many clowns compete for other reasons.

The most obvious is the fun and evaluations. It is fun to show your talent and have it compared with others who are competing. Each contestant receives an evaluation sheet that the judges fill out on your performance. If there are three judges, you will receive three different evaluation forms.

You must keep in mind that the evaluations are the individual judge's opinion. And, they can vary. As an example the 3rd place medal for makeup Auguste went to a very good friend. Two of the judges scored him almost perfect. The third judge only scored him in the low 70's. Still, when the scores were combined the first two rated him high enough that he earned third place.

FYI: Brian competed in single skit competition. He missed third place by 3 points in the judge's score. He was not upset as the three that placed were very good entertainers. Most clowns look forward to the judge's evaluation sheets. Their scores are noted on them as well as their comments.

The judges comments can be very helpful. It is one thing to enjoy the applause from an audience. However, receiving compliments and recommendations from other clowns is gold. Many skits are done over and over again for competition. But each clown puts his/her own twist on the presentation.

One does not have to compete to pick up some great ideas. You will see some fantastic balloon sculptures, painted faces, makeup and costumes. The skit competitions will also bring a laugh and smile to your face. Competitions often bring out the "best of the best". And the best thing is that the clowns competing have supportive, friendly personalities.



Back Stage Magic special.

While supplies last.



Hare Raising Experience

Easy to perform sponge magic trick. Two large bunny rabbits are shown. They are compressed into one hand. The hand is shaken or some magic words spoken. When the hand is open the two large bunnies appear along with five baby bunnies.

Limited number of this trick in stock. Offering special price on those that did not sell during the WCA Convention. Originally priced as \$7.50. Mention this article in Grease Paint and you can purchase this trick for \$6.00. Team up with another clown that wants to purchase and you can get two for \$10.00.

This special pricing is only good for remaining inventory in stock. If you need the trick shipped the shipping charges will be added.

Groaner Knock Knock

1st Clown walks up to another and asks him if he wants to hear a good knock knock joke.

2nd Clown says yes

1st Clown begins by saying knock knock.

2nd Clown asks whose there?

1st Clown says Boo

2nd Clown asks Boo who?

1st Clown ask why he is crying and begins to laugh.

2nd Clown says that is a very old joke.

1st Clown says it is still funny, go on try it.

2nd Clown walks up to a third clown, nudges him and says knock knock

3rd Clown says "it's open come on in".

2nd Clown looks confused as 3rd clown walks off.

Productive Dead Air

As performers we are aware of dead air. The space where someone forgets what is supposed to happen next. One clown forgets her line or something else happens. The result is no one is doing anything, no one is saying anything, everyone just looks at each other like “now what”.

In most situations dead air is not a good thing. It suggests the clowns were not prepared, not rehearsed and no one knew what they were doing. It also is very unprofessional and raises a bright red flag that something went wrong. But there are also areas of our performance where dead air enhances and compliments what is taking place.

A clown is building something. He swings the hammer hitting the table, letting the audience think he hit his thumb. Everything stops. The clown slowly brings his thumb up to his eyes and in a very slow burn goes from a smile to a crying face holding his thumb in pain. All this action is dead air. However the activity taking place justifies the dead air and enhances the performance.

Two clowns are doing a skit. One clown says something that the second clown does not understand or is confused about. The clown can look into the audience and show a confused look on his face. Maybe he needs to scratch his head to emphasize the confusion. Finally he turns to the first clown and says his next line. There was dead air. Again, the actions and facial expression of the clown justifies it.

In both these situations the rest of the clowns need to relax and allow the active clown to play the part. Hitting the thumb or being confused can lose its impact if the other clowns just begin to talk over it. Never be afraid to allow the audience time to perceive and enjoy what is taking place.

One of the most valuable assets of clown are facial expressions. Yet many clowns do not use them that often. If you are working on a skit that would be enhanced by productive dead air, then write it in. Make sure everyone performing the skit is aware that activity will take place and that they need to relax allowing it to happen.

If the audience begins a good laugh during the dead air activity, let it linger. The applause is the stored harvest of your entertainment. The enthusiasm, laughter, giggles, cheering and other audience interactions are the fruit of the performance.

Your Not a Real Clown

There may be times when you hear someone say “your not a real clown”. I do not let that comment bother me as the individual speaking usually has no real definition for a clown. But I do not just ignore it. I have been known to say something like “we are sure having a lot of fun today”. And promptly move along.

The truth is that the definition of a clown is a comical entertainer. It may involve slapstick, face painting, balloon sculptures, passing out stickers, singing or any other antic. The makeup, costume and activity are designed to bring smiles to the audience face. And, there is nothing fake or not real about a smile or laughter.

Real is in the eyes of the beholder. The people you are entertaining. Not the individual making that comment. Chances are that individual does not do anything to entertain others. We know there are restrictions based on the environment we clown in. A hospital and senior center clown is different than a walk-around street clown.

The sad thing is that one can easily allow that negative comment to depress them. You have to understand that they do not put on a costume, take the time to learn and apply makeup or develop a talent such as you have. Chances are, if given the opportunity, they would not even try. So let their comment pass by.

Real clowns are not based on makeup, costume, expensive shoes or anything else. They are rated on their entertainment. Red Skelton walked on stage in a suit. He turned his head upside down, ruffled his hair, made a funny face and become a clown. Once he did the short routine he combed his hair, fixed his hat and was Red once again.

Carol Burnet has many different clownish characters. The one we recognize most is the old woman in the hat with the wash bucket. Jerry Lewis had many characters he played as well. His clown character was a type of hobo. But he also portrayed a clown in many other roles.

Your entire profile makes you a clown. Do not let someone put you down because you do not wear a lot of heavy makeup, clown shoes or have an expensive costume. The fact that you have an audience that appreciates what you do is all you need to know that you are a real clown.





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