

# Grease Paint

May 2019



## Clown Class 2019

The Quad City Clown Class of 2019 will be held on Saturday, June 8th. We will host the class in our normal meeting room at the Rock Island Fitness Center. The center is located at 4303 24th Street in Rock Island, IL.

Flyers are available to pass out. The class will also be listed on the Rock Island Parks Department website. We will also be making some posts on Facebook. We need troupe members to help us get the word out.

This is a one day class. We will cover the history of clowning, the different clown types and some clowning activities. Makeup will be covered as well as costumes on a budget. One does not have to invest a lot of money to get started.

We will teach some of the clown basics such as pocket magic, balloons and work on a few skits. Those attending will get “hands on” experience and coaching. A class picture will be taken for our website. And, we hope to pick up a few new members.

We need your help. Specifically we need to get the word out. If you can pass out flyers please let us know. We have them and will get some for you to distribute. Please tell your friends and anyone else you know who might be interested. If you want flyers, email [topper@yahoo.com](mailto:topper@yahoo.com).

A flyer has been attached as the last page of this newsletter. Feel free to copy it and share as email on your social media friends list. Come one, come all—it's time for Clown Class.

### Combine Sponge Magic:

You do not have to do only 1 trick. You can blend different sponge tricks.

### WCA Alley of the Year:

Criteria to be considered as WCA Alley of the Year.

Personal Pocket: A secure pocket to store your personal things.

Google Gift Card Scam: An email going around that is a scam to get you to buy cards.

Face Painter: A few members have mentioned it and we are talking with a painter to schedule a presentation and mini –workshop.

Walk-Around: A great place for new clowns to get started

Today's Choices Are: Good advice for just getting started with balloons.

Breaks: Clowns have just as much right to take breaks as other entertainers.

## *Combine Sponge Magic*

Just because you have a sponge square, a set of sponge balls and a sponge frog does not mean you have to do each routine by itself. Some of the best routines are the result of combining sponge tricks with each other.

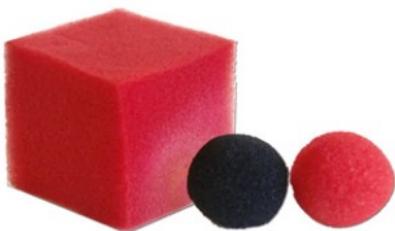
Everyone is familiar with sponge balls. There is also another trick called a sponge square. That trick includes a sponge square that can be turned inside out trapping a black ball inside. When the square is turned inside out with the black ball inside it the square forms a red ball. Done alone the red ball is shown. The ball is inserted in the hand pushing it into the closed fist.

As the red ball is pushed into the fist it turns right side out. Now the black ball is in the palm and the sponge square is in the other hand. Both hands are shown and the audience asked which is holding the sponge ball. If you manipulate it sloppy and allow the red to show they will pick that hand. You just say “no that is the square, the ball is over here”. When you show the black ball that is the end of the routine.

I have been known to disappear a red ball. Then show the ball disappeared. As they are watching that hand, I palm the black ball. I then ask if they wish to see it again. I repeat the illusion, but pass the red ball. I mention they are not following my hand. They are watching the other hand. That is when I show them the black ball.

You can mix a sponge frog with sponge rabbits, different colored sponge balls and any other sponge you want to work with. Just because the trick is sold as a unit such as the sponge square, that does not mean you cannot combine it with other sponge magic.

Some of the best sponge magic comes from blending other sponge products. For the ending of my sponge routine, I like to have four kids end up holding a sponge ball. I use a change bag (loaded with a large ball). I have them put their sponge balls in the bag one at a time. I make some magic words and wave my hand, then push the giant red ball out of the bag.



# ***Criteria To Be Considered WCA Alley Of The Year***



Every year the World Clown Association presents an award to that one special Clown Alley that stands above the rest. It is not given lightly to just any Alley. It is given to the WCA Alley that sets the standards for other Alleys around the world.

Here is the criteria that needs to be met for consideration of the award. The alley must be a current WCA Alley (the QCCT is a lifetime member) in good standing.

What impact has the Alley had in the community?

- Nursing home/Veterans visits
- Hospital/Hospice work
- Civic groups
- Parades, walks, public events
- Schools (all ages)
- Holidays/Festivals
- Libraries
- Other

Clown Education

- Clown classes
- Scholarships available for clowns from Alley funds
- Alley lecturers/Seminars
- Number of educational activities offered to the Alley

Recruiting new members

- Alley morale and participation
- Alley material available to members (books, videos, etc.)

Conventions

- Attending and participating members
- Sponsoring/Hosting
- Presentations

Grants

- Funds received for Alley

Funds received for community

Alley Participation and International Clown Week

Total number of current WCA members

Why our Alley should be the Alley Of The Year

The size of the alley is not relevant. The award goes to the alley that does the most with the funds and membership they have available. Each alley will be considered individually for their accomplishments and contributions to the art of clowning.

The deadline to get the information submitted is January 31st. This is a very prestigious award that identifies an alley that went above and beyond as needed to:

1. Educate the public
2. Enhance the creativity and skills associated with clowning
3. Play an active role in community support.
4. Work together to share the talents of clowning with the membership.

The Quad City Clown Troupe has an active calendar in many of these areas. There is no reason the troupe could not gather the information to submit our alley for consideration in 2020. We need to begin documenting our efforts and getting a few action pictures.

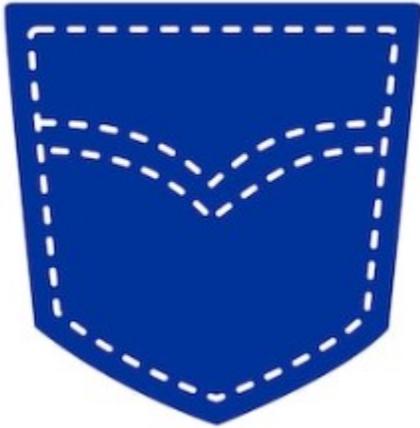
All information needs to be submitted to Brian, 2019 President. He will formalize the data and pictures for the troupe's approval prior to submission. Do not let the size of our alley hold you down. This award is based on what we can do with the funds and membership we have.

## ***Personal Pocket***

As clowns put their first costume together they often do not think of pockets. We need them to carry our stuff. But beyond that a special pocket they always forget about is one for personal items.

We carry ID, car keys, medications and other personal items with us when we clown. The one thing you do not want to do is mix those items up with other props and magic in your pockets. There is always a chance you will pull out a prop and drop one of your personal items. Or, if

the kids begin to crowd you and reach into your pockets, you do not want them to get hold of something personal. Most clowns use a pocket that is on the inside of their costume. I know of a couple clowns that keep their personal items in their clown sock. Still one clown has a pocket near his belt that has a zipper holding it closed. That is his personal pocket.



There are no specific rules for a personal pocket. It can be any size needed. Outside the costume or inside makes no difference as long as you are the only one that has access. The materials carried depends on the individual clown. If you wear hearing aids or have other special items you might need supplies for them as well. What types of things do you carry in a personal pocket?

- Drivers license and other ID
- Cell phone
- Medication
- Breath mints
- Car keys
- Gum

The list can be as large or small as the clown needs. These are personal, private items that the audience should not have access to. Most clowns fill the personal pocket before they leave the parking area. They want the pocket tucked away from their clown stuff. That way as the kids run to them all they need to do is start to clown.

## ***Google Gift Cards Scam***

You might receive an email from a name that looks familiar to you. The one I received stated he needed Google Gift cards (\$300 worth). He could not order or transfer. Once I had them, he would refund me. Some have slightly different wording.

There are a scam. Someone duplicated a friend's email and is trying to scam you. Do not respond. Just mark the email as spam and delete it. You may receive a couple, I received four. They are all spam. The problem is that once someone duplicates your email, it is very hard, if not impossible to stop it.

Best thing is not to respond. If someone mentions to you they received one with your name, send an email to everyone on your friends list warning them. These people pick up email names from the Internet and just send them out randomly trying to get gift cards.



## FACE PAINTER

### Face Painting Lecture

Contacts are being made to bring in a face painter for a lecture/workshop. A few of our members have mentioned. So, we are speaking with painters who are interested in presenting a program for us.

A date has not been determined yet. Communications are taking place with a painter. Once finalized an announcement will be made in Grease Paint, on our website and through our email system.

The approach we are asking for involves:

- Just getting started
- Products to use
- Cautions that need to be taken
- How to market as a face painter
- And advanced face painting

Due to the volume of information that will be shared, the business meeting that evening will be held to fifteen (15) minutes or less. We plan to allow plenty of time for presentation, questions/answers and other information.

Keep your calendar handy to post the date/time of this lecture once it is announced. Also, if there are specific subjects you wish us to cover, speak with an officer or board member. This year the troupe has two primary goals. The first is recruiting. The second is something Brian likes to refer to as “feed the membership”.

Feed the membership involves responding to program requests, tips, ideas, and other things that meet the inquiring needs of our membership. When this workshop/presentation is scheduled we hope to see you there.

NOTE: There will be no charge for members to attend. Funds for this presentation will be taken care of by the Quad City Clown Troupe.

# Walk-Around

Walk-arounds are one of the easiest ways to clown. The other is a parade. The difference is a parade keeps moving and you do not have to worry about mingling with people. A sight gag or just wave saying hello is all it takes. But walk-arounds can be just as easy.

When we walk-around we are socially mingling with people. One does not have to have a major prop, routine or big magic. It can be as simple as passing out stickers, or just getting into conversations. Most people just enjoy a clown spending some time with them. And don't forget the pictures they want to take.

There are a lot of simple things one can do. Take the spring out of the toilet tissue holder, get a paint brush and walk-around. As you move brush the spring with the paint brush. Mention you are doing your spring cleaning. That can serve as an opener. Once they respond put them in your pocket and get into a conversation.

It could be as simple as telling people you found a frog in your pocket when you washed your pants. Let them know he seems to want to stay around. Let them react, put the sponge frog back in the pocket telling them that is where he feels safe. Then pass out stickers or play off something around you.

You are not going to spend a lot of time in one spot. The only exception is if you start to do balloons. Once you begin you will probably be stuck near that spot until all the kids have had a balloon. Balloons are a children's magnet. Do one and kids will come running from across the parking lot/play ground.

One way to avoid being stuck all day is to carry a handful of balloons in your pocket. When you run out just tell them you have no more. Keep the balloons in one pocket. When you run out turn that pocket inside out if you need to.

One of the most enjoyable environments to walk-around is senior centers. They do not require much in the form of entertainment. They just appreciate a clown spending some time with them. You can sing with them, tell stories, and do some very easy magic. The smiles, laughter and look on their face lets you know how much they enjoy it.

Seasoned clowns need to keep an eye on the new ones. Be ready to step in if they get crowded or seem to be in trouble. Regardless if you need to step in or not, the new clown feels more confident knowing help is near.



## *Today's choices are ...*

When you just get started with balloon sculptures you are limited to the animals/things you can make. You just have not worked with them enough to be able to do multiple balloon sculptures and all the other things kids can come up and ask for.

When you only do a few of the basic sculptures, the last thing you need is a kid in your line that asks for something you can't make. And, the kid does not stop there. You suggest a turtle and he asks for a Star Wars character. You mention a sword and he then asks for a fighter jet. He keeps asking for other things and the other kids in line begin to get anxious. You can avoid this situation.

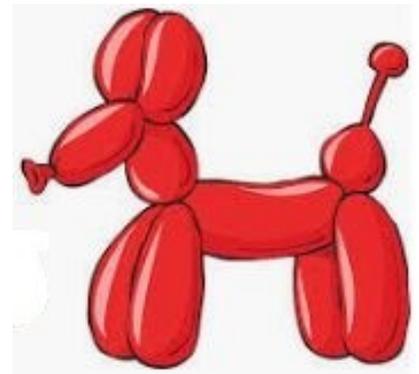
I first watched this approach at a local trade show. There was a deaf magician there doing balloons. He had a board listing the balloon sculptures he made. The kids pointed to the item they wanted. If they tried to ask for something he just pointed to the board for them to make a selection.

You do not have to know a lot of balloons to get started. Begin with the basic dog. From there, by changing some of the measurements, you can make a rabbit, a mouse, and a horse. Playing with a series of small bubble twists you can make a turtle. Then picking up a "B-body" balloon you can make a hummingbird, and mosquito.

If you take your time and think about it you can make a lot of different balloons just from your experience with the basic dog and some other simple twists. Time to make a display board. List the sculptures you can do. Set that board beside you as you get ready to work. When the kids step up point to the board and tell them "today's choices are". Let them pick what they want.

There will always be that one that tries to come up with something off the list. Just remind him that those are the choices for today. Do not make anything else or you will be asked for others all day long. If the kid cannot decide, have him stand to the side and tell you when he makes a selection. Do a balloon for the next kid in line. This keeps your line moving. When he picks a balloon, make his then continue working the line.

When you work with a board and host the posture of today's choices, it eliminates a lot of stress. And, keeping the sculptures simple moves the line. Being able to do fancy multiple balloon designs is great. But if you have a very long line, often it is best to keep the line moving.



# Breaks

Entertainers usually work with built in breaks for those long events. If you have been involved with a dance, or other event that involves a band you know they take breaks. It is very common for them to work 45 minutes out of each hour and take a 15 minute break. When bands are hired that is an unwritten fact that everyone respects.

Clowns should be no different. Bands play music while clowns do shows and walk-arounds. A clown is on his/her feet just as long. They don't play music, they work with props and other materials. They have just as much right to a break as everyone else. This holds true especially if they are doing balloons.

Breaks need to be discussed/coordinated with the event personnel in advance. Some clowns have gone as far as to request a "safe" area they can go to during the break. That area is away from the crowd. The break is a good time to replenish materials. If you are working balloons, be sure you are portable. You need to be able to pick up your pump, balloons etc. and move to the break area, and back.

Breaks are another health issue. Clowns may have a condition that requires them to eat, or take medication. If the environment is hot, then drinking fluids to stay hydrated is equally important. At a minimum, many just need to get off their feet for a while.

I suggest you try to work on the same type of schedule as bands do. Let the event people know that you will be taking a 15 minute break each hour. I do not set an alarm and take the break exactly at 45 minutes. But I make sure I am able to break once each hour. I never exceed the 15 minutes. If you have an audience around you, let them know you will be back after a short break.

If the event has no "safe" area for you to use, then consider taking a break in your car. Do not try to break and remain within the public eye. In the eyes of a child, if you are near, then they see no reason not to walk over to you for a balloon.

Many events just accept the fact you will be taking a break. But it is best never to assume. Always make it a point to mention it. It is always best to make sure those hosting the event are aware.





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Send articles and the release acknowledgement documents as a PDF files to:

[topperhtc@yahoo.com](mailto: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](http://qcclowns.com). At the end of the year all issues of Grease Paint are made available on CD for purchase. Because of these open distribution sources, articles received without the supporting release and acknowledgement statements will not be published.



Be a Clown



Be a Clown  
QUAD CITY  
CLOWN TROUPE



Be a Clown



Quad City Clown Troupe and RI Parks & Rec Present:

# Clowning Basics

An interactive class that includes clowning, makeup, costume design, balloon sculpture, magic & more! *FUN for the WHOLE family!*

**Saturday, June 8th**

**9:00am-4:00pm**

Rock Island Fitness & Activity Center • 4303 24th Street

**Open to Ages 6-100** (students under 10 must be accompanied by an adult)

**Costs:** \$25 per person or  
\$50 for a family up to 4 people

Registration includes membership to the Quad City Clown Troupe, a makeup kit, freebies, and lunch!

**Register at:**

Rock Island Fitness & Activity Center • 4303 24th Street

Online: [www.rigov.org/epark](http://www.rigov.org/epark) • Activity Code 8560 • Phone: 309-732-7275