

Grease Paint

September 2019



Clown Antics

Clowns take every day normal activities and make them funny. That is the secret to clowning around. Key in on a simple daily activity and build entertainment around it.

A person walks into the kitchen, picks up a jug of water, opens it and pours some into a glass. That is a normal activity. Now just think of how a clown might do it. The first thing that comes to mind is having trouble getting the top off.

Twist and it does not open. Put a cloth over it and the cloth just turns with the clowns hand, again nothing. Maybe try to have a friend hold it as you try to turn it. Again, the top does not come off.

Finally holding the jug cradled in his arms he makes a massive cranking movement with his hands. The top comes off and the vibration and recoil causes the jug of water to pour all over the clown.

A simple task that can easily be converted into a clown routine. There are many more. Can you imagine what you can do with a suitcase you are trying to open? How about trying to open a car door when your hands are full of bags and boxes?

When you have some time, sit down with pencil and paper. Make a few notes of daily activities. Do not try to expand on them yet. You want to build as big a list as you can. Then, pick out one or two of them and start to think

National Clown Week Proclamation: August 1st thru the 7th. The clown troupe did their part to celebrate.

Inbox / Spam: Email and how incoming mail is handled.

Snuggles Voice Mail Skit: A simple one person skit that the clown vents the voice of Snuggles.

September Meetings: A short listing of what will take place during our 3rd and 16th meeting.

Control the Impulse: Save money by controlling those impulse purchases.

What can WCA do for you?: A request for feedback from the WCA Alley Director.

Lost Child: Clowns can also be in a position to help.

Elections are Coming: Next month the troupe will be electing officers for 2020.

in terms of what could go wrong. Build a few ideas and see how you might be able to clown with them. The next idea may be figuring out a way someone can help. When you bring a second clown into the situation the possibilities double.

Do not stop with just one or two. Take another sip on your beverage, mine is always coffee, and pick out a couple more to build on. This is one of the best exercises you can do for your creativity. I have a file set up for this material. And, being honest there are a lot more ideas in the file than I can use.

Not every activity will turn out to be a good clowning routine. As I said I have plenty that are still in the list/planning stages. But you must work through all those ideas to find the few you want to work on. And, if you feel you have a good idea but are stuck, ask one of your friends for their input. Some of the best skits that have been performed began with this simple process.

National Clown Week

*NOW, THEREFORE, I, **RICHARD NIXON**, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the **week** of August 1 through August 7, 1971, as International **Clown Week**. I invite the Governors of the States and the appropriate officials of other areas under the United States flag to issue similar **proclamations**.*

The Quad City Clown Troupe took part in this celebration. Clowns were at McDonald's, Chick-Fil-A and the River Bandits game. Stickers were passed out, balloons twisted, science shows and magic performed.

Many were surprised to see us out there. Still more were surprised to learn that many years ago our President made this proclamation. Everyone enjoyed themselves. A lot of favorable comments were made. The Quad City Clown Troupe took advantage of the opportunity to get our name out. You might recognize Bow Wow and Pockets as they prepared to walk around at a local McDonalds.

We don't have to wait until next year to get out and share some smiles. Clown week was a good "door opener" for businesses to allow us to walk around. But now that they have watched us, many have asked us to return.

It was a happy clown week for everyone.



Inbox / Spam

Most email programs function the same. Email arrives and the software makes a determination where it needs to go. Most end up in your inbox. Some are sent to your spam folder. The program makes its best guess.

The individual sending you the email has no control. They cannot identify where the mail goes. There are no such email addresses that look like: `topperhtc@yahoo.com/inbox`. That is why a lot of responses you set up tell you to check your spam if it does not arrive in your inbox.

However, your email software does allow you to manage the incoming mail. If you have junk in your inbox you can mark it as spam and push it to your spam folder. In turn, if you find something important in your spam you can mark it and push it to your inbox. The software remembers and handles them for you.

Spam that comes to your inbox, and had been marked, is pushed automatically to spam. And email you marked not as spam is delivered to your inbox. You just need to identify and mark new email that ends up in the wrong box.

We need to browse through our spam folders. There is a lot of it. If you can check it once each day the spam folder will not grow so full. If you are sending email you need to take steps for the receiver to work with it.

Use a subject the individual can pick up on as they browse their spam. Brian always tries to identify the clown troupe in the subject line. As we browse spam the subject line is all we see. And, most of us do not bother opening email that hints the contents are junk.

Spam will always be a part of email. The harsh truth is that spam arrives almost hourly. If you have not opened your email for a few days then a full spam folder will be waiting for you. Just be thankful you only have one or two email accounts. Brian has five. Each account is from a different source. Between business, website, organizations he belongs to and his private email he deletes between 300 and 500 spam each morning.

Marking and moving email helps a lot. It doesn't take much time to delete spam when you only need to browse subject lines. There have been a couple times when important email has been deleted. In those instances Brian received a phone call or second email that was easier to identify. But as long as we use email we will always have the inbox/spam situation to work with.

Snuggles Voice Mail Skit

This is a one person skit. You will need to practice in front of a mirror to rehearse Snuggles' voice. The words were carefully selected so that there should be minimum mouth movement. When Snuggles speaks hold your mouth slightly open in a natural pose.

1st Clown: (Speaking to the audience) There is a big party Saturday. I want to be sure my friend Snuggles knows about it. I would like her to come to it with me.

1st Clown: Holds hand near face with thumb and little finger extended, pretending it is his cell phone. He pretends to dial Snuggles. He looks at the audience and tells them it is ringing.

Snuggles: Hello, Snuggles cannot take your call now. Record after the tone..... (if you have trouble saying the word now you can leave it out. After "take your call" immediately say "record at the time")

1st Clown: Waits, but there is no tone sound. He continues to wait until he starts to deliver his message. "Snuggles this is— he is interrupted by a beep tone, followed by click.

1st Clown: Acts frustrated but dials again.

Snuggles: Hello, Snuggles cannot take your call now. Record after the tone.....

1st Clown: This time when he tries to leave message the tone and click sound before he has a chance to say anything.

1st Clown: Looks at the audience very confused. He dials once again.

Snuggles: Hello, Snuggles cannot take your call now. Record after the tone.....

1st Clown: (trying to talk very fast so he gets message in before he is cut off) There is a big party this Saturday—again.... Tone/click.

1st Clown: (make a ringing sound) Answers his cell phone.

Snuggles: Hello, this is Snuggles. Did you call?

1st Clown: Yes I wanted to tell you there is a big party Saturday. I was wondering if you wanted to go with me. There is a long pause. Finally the clown asks again but in stead of any answer he hears record at the tone once again. Waving his hands he walks off stage.

September Meetings

Our first meeting, September 3rd will focus on clowning in senior centers. This will be a round robin discussion. We have many members who work in these environments. We will talk about experiences, problems we have run into, and some of the enjoyment we have had.

Some may have questions we will try to answer. Others may have ideas they want to talk about trying. We will also talk about some skits that can be done in these environments.

The troupe will host a garage sale on the 16th. Members are encouraged to bring items they no longer use to sell or give away. The troupe will not charge any fees, or take any of the proceeds for this sale. This could be a great opportunity for our new clowns to pick up some materials.

Control the Impulse

Clowns and magicians usually have a box or drawer somewhere packed with stuff they do not use. The biggest contributor to that is impulse. We see something at a garage sale, a seminar or convention and, by impulse, buy it. We bring it home and it never makes it into our clowning.

I refer to this backstock of things as my “some day” stuff. Some day I might use it. Or, some day I may run into a friend that would want it. But for most of us that some day never comes. I fixed this problem by controlling my impulse. Before I reach into my pocket to pay I ask myself a few simple questions:

When will I use this?

Is this something I will carry around?

How often will I use it?

Can I work with it pending my dexterity?

How fragile is the item?

Is it something I have to replenish parts?

These are just a few questions. But if you approach your impulse with these challenges it will help you. It will help curb those impulse buys. And, before you make the purchases you are thinking of how and where it will be used.

If my answers suggest I will not use it enough to justify the purchase I let it go. This approach has reduced my spending and helped hold my “some day” piles to a minimum.

What can WCA do for you?

The Quad City Clown Troupe is a life time member of WCA. The WCA Alley Director, Janet Tucker (Jelly Bean), has a request. It was communicated in her alley newsletter both in July and the recent August issue. As a troupe we need to try to offer some feedback.

If you have not visited the WCA website (worldclown.com) please do. There are tabs near the top. These are pull down menus that take you to various pages on the site. The "Resources" pull down takes you to all kinds of educational information.

Most alleys are going through the same problems. They are looking for fresh motivational ideas, new members and creative activities. Clown alleys are not alone. Other organizations are having the same issues. Technology can be a great thing. But when it sits our youth down to spend all their free time with the phone, it is not that productive.

Janet is looking for feedback. She wants to hear from members. The WCA leadership shares her request. What can WCA do for you? We are not talking about what can be done for the alleys. They want to learn what you expect, want and would like to see from WCA. No idea is too small. If you have thoughts on what can be done to promote clowning, attract new members, bring excitement to meetings and share the joys of clowning with the community, please respond.

Send your comments to: topperhtc@yahoo.com. Brian will combine all responses into one email and forward to Janet. Replies can be anonymous or signed. It makes no difference. WCA wants to hear what needs to be done to address your concerns/needs. WCA is reaching out and if you have ideas, you need to respond.

Perhaps another important question that could use some feedback involves membership. The website is packed with information, as a member you have access to insurance at a good price, and you receive Cloning Around monthly. Students who enrolled in our 2019 clown class have an E membership where they can read the magazine online.

Is there a reason you have not joined yet? What are you looking for in a national clown organization that is not available in WCA? Your response for not joining will be shared anonymously. If there are reasons you are not a member that WCA can take care of, I'm sure they would like to learn of them.



Lost Child

Last month I included an article on the fear of clowns. In this issue I want to discuss ways we can help children who are not afraid of clowns but have other trauma. We can also be the figure the child turns to for help. When that happens we need to carefully step up.

I used the word carefully as we have to be aware of possible situations. The last thing you want is a parent to claim you were inappropriate with their child. If at all possible, do not pick the child up. Keep your hands in plain sight. Try to hold your hands open with your fingers extended for all to see.

The best thing to do is take the child's hand and walk with them. Here is how I handled a lost child:

I was working a community walk-around when I noticed a little girl crouched near a table. I was in the crafters area and people were browsing the vendor displays. I knelt down in front of her, keeping a distance in the event she was scared. I asked what was wrong. With tears in her eyes she said she lost her mom.

I asked her to hold my hand and told her we would go find her. Slowly she got up and we started walking. I began yelling "MOM, MOM WHERE ARE YOU?" Everyone stopped and looked at us. Then they began looking around at each other. Her mom was in the far corner. When she realized what had happened she came over to us. The little girl hugged mom but before I could leave she hugged me and kissed me on the cheek.

As clowns we have the ability of getting people's attention. It makes no difference if the child is lost or hurt. When needed, do what you can to get help. If the child is hurt then call out for someone to bring band aids, or worse look at a person and tell them to call 911. Stay by the child and be ready to direct any assistance that comes.

I have a friend that told me a child ran up to her screaming for help. She turned and pointed at two men who were quickly trying to blend into the crowd and get away. The clown called out to a policeman by the entrance. Long story short it was the start of an abduction. The child ran to the clown for help. She stayed with the child while the police called for the parent and began searching the area.

Those are a few drastic examples. The situation may not be that drastic. But one never knows the impact the situation is having with the child. These are prime times a clown can be extremely supportive. Remember, a clown is an entertainer that may be put into a situation where he/she must also be supportive. After all, we already have the audience's attention. Do not hesitate to use that attention to get help when it is needed.

The Election is Coming

New officers and three board members will be elected in October. The positions are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and three board members. A short job description is:

President: Presides over the meetings and acts as one of the contact persons for the troupe. Monitors the troupe's email system and helps maintain the website. (Currently the email system uses Thunder Mailer software.)

The email system is not specific to the clown troupe. It is something Brian uses. Anyone that wants to take over the responsibility can use their own email database, or the troupe will purchase the license for the Thunder Mailer. That license is extremely reasonably priced. Brian will be available to help with the learning curve and to support that person as needed.

The website is maintained with a program called Sitebuilder. That is a free download and it is about as easy as it can get. The software opens the site on your computer. You enter and post what you wish and then click a link to upload it onto the Internet. Again, Brian is willing to maintain or help anyone who wishes to take over that responsibility.

Vice President: Responsible to run the meetings in the absence of the President. He helps with the management/leadership activities of the troupe.

Secretary: This position is responsible for the minutes and filing non-financial documents. Works with the individual running the mail system to get the meeting minutes published and emailed out.

Treasurer: The financial officer for the troupe. This individual maintains the records to include checking, petty cash, savings and the CD. The treasurer also provides a short financial report during the meetings as necessary.

All funds received are passed to the treasurer for deposit and recording. Any expenditures must be first approved by the membership.

Board Members: Three members are elected to serve on the board. Most business is conducted with the general membership. However, as needed a board meeting can be called to discuss and handle complaints, problems and other business.



The first rule of this election is DO NOT PANIC. The nomination process requires two steps. Nominations are accepted by email or in person with any one of the officers. The night of the election additional nominations will be accepted from the floor. The nomination is only the first step in the process.

The second step is that the individual being nominated must accept the nomination. This may sound strange. But the last thing that needs to happen is for a name to be submitted and everyone votes that person into a position they do not want. So the individual has the final say in accepting or declining the nomination.

If you want to run for a position, and know you will not be at the election meeting you need to notify Brian (topperhtc@yahoo.com). If your name is submitted for nomination he will announce that you have contacted him accepting the nomination. Without any communication of the nominated individuals acceptance that name will not be placed on the ballot.

All existing officers and board members are expected to be ready to help make the leadership transition as smooth as possible. It helps if they have detailed notes on their duties, and are willing to spend time with the new officer as needed for support.

For the record, there are many members who have served in leadership over and over again. It is too easy just to elect the same individuals and carry on year after year. But the harsh truth is that any time a new individual takes office the troupe takes a few steps in growth.

New people bring fresh ideas, new suggestions and have their own skills to work with. A prime example is our clown class. A few years ago the existing leadership hosted the class again and again. Over the years the enthusiasm and results began to dwindle. I am not talking about the total number of those taking the class. I am referring to the new clowns that continued being part of the troupe.

The last couple years, different individuals took charge of the class. The results verify the need for others to step up. We have new clowns in the troupe and they are active. This can be directly linked to the class. The difference was how the class was organized, promoted and followed though.

Please consider running for an office. Now is the time to reach out to the officers and ask about their job. They will be happy to let you know what they do, and about how much time it takes to handle those tasks. A critical position this year will be President. Brian, due to personal schedule, is not available. He will be willing to support the new officer. But not running for the position in 2020.



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