

Ventriloquists employ a variety of techniques to create the illusion of a living character. Lip control is only one of the techniques. A friend of mine mentioned that Terry Fator, the very gifted singing impressionist ventriloquist, turns his head toward his puppet when the puppet speaks. He was wondering if this was a technique Terry uses to hide his lip movement. It's an interesting question because it underscores a popular misconception about the art of ventriloquism, and that is that lip control is somehow the main point of the performance. Now, Terry Fator's lip control is very, very good, so he's not so much hiding his lips as he is simply directing attention to the puppet character. Vents do this partially because it does focus the audience's attention on the puppet, but also because in order to create the illusion that this is a living character, the ventriloquist has to respond as he would to a living character. If there were a real person on stage with you, you would look at them when they spoke. Same with a puppet. The trick of ventriloquism is not to fool people into believing you aren't actually doing the voice, or to impress them with your ability to speak without moving your lips, but to render the character so funny, engaging and believable that the audience forgets, at least for the moment, that the character is a puppet and not a real living being. A good ventriloquist makes you forget you are watching a ventriloquist.

Mr. Pitts



# The Joey Journal



The Texas Clown Association  
March - April 2010

# THE JOEY JOURNAL

Published Bi-monthly for Members of  
**The Texas Clown Association, Inc.**  
Kay "Nannie Belle" Quittner, Editor  
David Pitts, Cover Artist

**Read it online via your TCA website:** [www.texasclownassociation.com](http://www.texasclownassociation.com)

**Letters to the Editor**, articles and other related items may be mailed to *The Joey Journal*, 116 Nichols Drive, San Marcos, Texas, 78666 or by sent by email to [joeyjournal@yahoo.com](mailto:joeyjournal@yahoo.com). Only letters addressed to the Editor which are signed will be considered for publication. Submissions accompanied by a stamped envelope with return address will be returned after publication. Submitted photographs may be black and white or color prints; please, no slides, copies, or Polaroids.

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**Publication deadlines** On or before January 5, March 1, May 1, July 1, August 1 (special convention edition) and November 1. Articles can be sent to [joeyjournal.com](http://joeyjournal.com) in Word format or in the body of your email for the easiest exchange of information.

<b>Membership and Dues</b>	Regular Membership:	\$ 25.00
	Family (each add'l):	15.00
	Junior Membership:	12.50

**Central membership mailing location:** Send all membership questions, dues, renewals, reinstatements, address changes and applications to TCA, Inc., P. O. Box 820, Hurst, Texas 76053

## ***Purpose of the Texas Clown Association***

1. To promote, preserve, and improve the profession of clowning.
2. To provide the opportunity to study the art, history, and philosophy of clowning.
3. To educate its members and the general public in the wholesome and clean entertainment that is provided by the profession of clowning.
4. To provide news to the members of all clown events in the state of Texas.

**SPRING ISSUE**  
**MARCH—APRIL 2010**

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## **A Word from the Prez.....**

Hello to all my friendly Joeys. Spring has sprung and everything is blooming. It's time for us to do some blooming also. Get out in the sun and start the summer clowning. With all the cold weather I have been getting a little cabin fever so I'm ready for sun and fun. Don't forget to drink lots of water and stay in the shade as much as possible. Our job is to make them laugh not get sick trying to.

It's time for TCA annual dues. We are sending out the notices a little different this year. We want everyone that has been a member in the last 3 years to have a chance to come back to TCA. We want and need each and everyone. So if you have a clown friend that is not a member of TCA tell them about our organization and how much fun we have at our Convention.

We are in need of a leader to take over the Educational Directors position. Aurora Krause will be at the Convention to help out and get you up to speed on the position. Anyone interested contact me at [kudosra@yahoo.com](mailto:kudosra@yahoo.com). I hope to see each and every one of you in Granbury for the 2010 TCA Convention. We are going to have a great time.

**Bump A Nose**

**Andy A.**

## **HOW TO GET FAMOUS OR WE REALLY NEED YOUR HELP**

Wouldn't you like to see your name in print? Would you like to be read by all of your peers? Do you want to be known for what great ideas you have? If your answer to any of these questions is yes - and even if your answer is no - the *Joey Journal* needs you.

Our bank of articles has run dry. **WE NEED ARTICLES!!** Any clowning subject is fine but we really need some how-to articles, problem solving articles, or anything of interest that would advance the art of clowning.

To make it easier, we hope, some new technology has come to the *Joey Journal*. In the last issue, associated with the article on using a computer in clowning was a *COLOR* picture. That's right, we can now print some color on the inside pages!! It is our hope that this will make it easier to write and illustrate an article!!

Articles can be sent in just about any format. The only format that is problematic is pdf, especially if the pdf was created using a copier or scanner. You can e-mail your articles (preferred) to: [joeyjournal@yahoo.com](mailto:joeyjournal@yahoo.com), or you can send by snail mail.

If you want to include a picture—that would be great. Pictures can also be sent in any format (again, except pdf) Preferred format is jpg (jpeg) - but

other formats such as tiff, png, and bmp are fine, just no pdf pictures. One caveat about pictures that are reprinted in newsletters (and magazines) - they need to have good contrast—especially between the main subject and the background. The printing process tends to “wash out” pictures—in other words you lose some of the contrast and the subject won't stand out. As a practical example, if you write an article on making a particular balloon animal, and you want to take a picture to add to the article, then need to make sure that the balloon sits on and in front of a background that is quite different than the color of the balloon.

So, PLEASE send in some articles. We want the *Joey Journal* to continue to be a great publication—actually we would really like it to be a BETTER publication. All we need is a few funny clowns to work their magic with a pen!!

Your editors,

Kay and Andy

## **REMINDER—DUES ARE DUE**

Please remember that all memberships expire on March 31.....that means dues are now DUE!! If you haven't mailed them, please do. Regular members are \$25, family members \$15 and Junior Joeys \$12.50. You can mail to TCA or to the Treasurer: Andy Quittner, 116 Nichols Dr., San Marcos, TX 78666.

## What's in a pose?....

by: Mauri BINKIE Norris

I recently returned from the Clowns of America International Inc. Convention in Sturbridge Mass. Many things stand out from the event, including meeting new friends and renewing old friendships, learning a new gag or line and shopping, and dancing and shopping and dancing and shopping and dancing. Well, you get the picture.....but, there was one weak area that really stuck with me. You might think it seems like a little thing, but I noticed that during the make up and wardrobe competitions, the participants rarely (I would guess, less than 10% of them) had any idea of how to pose. Now, this is simply my opinion (and by the way, I was a judge for the white face categories), but I felt that the poses were very limited and mostly ineffectual. Those poses were 'for the judges', but clowns usually pose for the public or for the camera. The pose should be one of a clown's BEST LOOKS. It should reflect or at least give a hint of the clown's personality.

Each different clown category might employ a variety of poses, using the proper movements and styles to reflect not only the type but the character of the clown himself. Like:

- ◆ the very reserved, graceful and poised look of the Classic White face
- ◆ the larger and funnier look of the Comedy White face
- ◆ the more extreme, clumsy and hilarious look of the Auguste
- ◆ the proud and satisfied stance of the Hobo
- ◆ the minimal movement and expression of the Tramp
- ◆ the appropriate actions of the Character Clown

The pose should incorporate not only the actions or position of the body, but the facial expression as well. Often I have heard lecturers advise clowns to practice their facial expressions in front of a mirror. The same is true for the pose. Practice! Practice! Practice! It is important to get it right. You will use it all of the time. The pose is not just important for competition. Being constantly in the public eye, all clowns should know how to 'look' their best and express their characters to a crowd.

I heard one conventioner remark that we needed a class on posing! Perhaps, but then again we do not want to mass-produce clone clowns. Poses are personal and individual. Often the physical abilities of the clown will determine at least a range of available movements and poses. What is a good, even great, pose for one clown may not work for the other. Try them out as you would try out a new hat - put it on and see how it looks and feels. If it's not right, throw it back and try another and another until you get the ones that are right for your clown.

Now here are a few suggestions to get you started. These ideas might be the most appropriate for Characters, but try modifying them for use by your own clown. Remember to include the proper facial expressions for the pose.

Ballerina: touch fingertips above head, point one toe in front and bend forward slightly at the hips

Baseball Player: assume a batter's stance, gripping 'pretend' bat over up stage shoulder

Soldier/Sailor: stand at attention and salute

Dapper: puff up chest and tip hat (as in "How do you do?")



Boxer: raise clasped hands over head in winner's stance

Little Girl: scrunch skirt with one hand and throw kiss with other hand

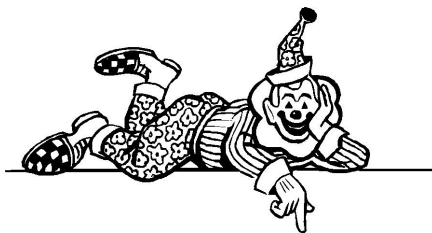
Other possibilities:

lift one foot, sit down, kneel down, turn to side in hitch-hiker stance,

point toward something, touch bow-tie or hat with one hand

And one more time because it is important.....

**PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE! POSE!**



## WHERE ARE THOSE INSTRUCTIONS? HOW DOES THIS TRICK WORK?

Have you ever asked those questions? A 3-ring binder and some page protectors will answer most of your questions. After purchasing ANY trick or game that you use for clowning. I am sure you read thru the instructions a few times until you master the trick. What do you do with the instructions? Put them in a drawer? Throw them away? Or just forget where you put it? Try putting the instructions (or DVD's) in a page protector and put it in a 3-ring notebook. I keep my instructions in a RED 3-ring binder. I have other colored notebooks for notes from conventions, clown camp, and classes I have attended. You could use index dividers and separate the instructions in different categories, i.e., Walkarounds, Paradeability, Birthday Parties, etc. That way you would have a better idea of where to look for the instructions, when you just can't recall how the trick works. It is always a good feeling when you know you have everything organized and in one place.

submitted by

Dale PATCHES Flashberg

Area Director South/Central Texas

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## **CARD VANISH HANDKERCHIEF ILLUSION**

### **Effect:**

A card is seen to be lifted from the pile, along with a handkerchief. **The card then suddenly vanishes into thin air!!!**

### **You Will Need**

- An ordinary deck of cards
- Handkerchief with a hem
- Toothpick
- Scissors

### **Preparation**

Take a toothpick and match it up against the end of one of the cards.

Now take the scissors and cut the toothpick so it's the same as the width of the card.

Push the toothpick into the hem of the handkerchief. Making sure that it won't fall out.

### **Performance**

Take the deck of cards and spread them out in a pile on the table in front of the audience.

Bring out your handkerchief and let the audience know that you are going to make a playing card vanish right in front of their eyes!!!

Now place the handkerchief on top of the pile of cards, making sure that the part of the handkerchief containing the toothpick is underneath the rest of the handkerchief.

**Keep a relaxed manner and don't make it obvious that you are laying out the handkerchief in any certain way.**



Picture 1

Now using one hand, grab the corner of the handkerchief with the toothpick hidden in the hem between your thumb and first finger. Lift up the handkerchief about 50 cm (about a foot and a half), then give the handkerchief a quick shake. Show the audience both sides of the hanky, who will see that the card (imaginary) has vanished in thin air!



# 2010 TCA Convention Ad Sales

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## **REAL SCIENCE IS ON OUR SIDE BUT LAUGHERCISE® MAY NOT HELP YOU LOSE WEIGHT**

In spite of what some psychologists might say, science IS on our side. That's right, a couple of scientists have been studying the effects of laughter. In a recent paper given at the 2010 Experimental Biology conference Drs. Lee Berk and Jerry Petrofsky presented some interesting findings based on a three week study of fourteen people who volunteered to do some laughing. It's a tough life but someone has to do it!!

The study of mind-body medicine probably began in the 1970's when Norman Cousins suggested that humor and the associated laughter can benefit one's health. Mr. Cousins was not a doctor, but he had been diagnosed with an autoimmune disease and he documented his use of laughter in treating himself. This was done with medical approval and oversight. His disease went into remission, and the results of his single person case study were published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Beginning in the 1980's Dr. Berk, along with another colleague, Dr. Stanley, picked up where Mr. Cousins left off. They discovered that laughter helps optimize the hormones in the endocrine system, including decreasing the levels of stress inducing hormones. They also bolstered Mr. Cousin's observations by showing that laughter actually boosts the immune system by increasing

production of antibodies, especially T-cells and Natural Killer cells' killing activity of tumor cells.

Dr. Berk has copyrighted the word "laughercise®" to refer to his studies showing that repetitious mirthful laughter causes the body to respond in a way similar to moderate physical exercise. That's right - your body thinks it is getting a workout when you laugh over and over again (like at convention). Not only does "Laughercise®" put you in a good mood and decrease stress hormones but it helps lower bad cholesterol and blood pressure as well as raising good cholesterol. That's some expensive medicine replacement (maybe we should charge more for our services!!).

But now for the most recent finding. In the recent study Drs. Berk and Petrofsky found that watching humorous videos not only had the effects mentioned above, but also changed the relative levels of two chemicals (leptin and ghrelin) much like that seen immediately after moderate physical exercise. The changes they observed are the same changes that are associated with increased appetite.

So the take home story is that as clowns, we should have less stress, better blood pressure and cholesterol levels - but with an increased appetite don't expect to get "skinny" from laughing!! Oh well, we can't have everything. But you know what, modern medicine is once again proving that an old Biblical adage is oh so true: Laughter is good medicine!!

Bump a nose and keep on laughin' - Andy "Banjo" Quittner



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- § Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.
- § Laughter is inner jogging.
- § Someday is not a day of the week.
- § Discretion is being able to raise your eye-brow instead of your voice.
- § Character is much easier kept than recovered.
- § It is better to wear out than to rust out.

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photos

### 2010 DATES to NOTE

TCA Annual Convention—September 29—October 3,  
2010—See article on page 10. Send in you application  
NOW.

Going to Branson? Try the Clown Jam—July 14-18, 2010,  
[www.ClownJam.com](http://www.ClownJam.com)

## **What's in a skit?**

By Peggy Barton

I have gone to classes and learned much from very valuable mentors. Still skit development takes time and thought for me. I thought I'd mention some of my processes and maybe it will help someone else.

First there are so many questions I ask myself. Most of these even I can answer.

1. Who is my audience?
2. What is my message or goal to achieve with this skit?  
(remember to KISS this one)
3. How many players do I have to work with?
4. Is this event inside or out?
5. How long do I have to perform this skit?
6. How much time do I have to make props?
7. Then, after I've given it my best effort, I again ask,  
who is my audience and is it funny?

### **Who is my audience?**

I need to consider age appropriate material, and speech. It's not funny or teaching if one doesn't understand the words. What's funny for a 5 year old might lose your adults. Consider a twist that might bring both ages together. Who are you intended to impact?

### **What is my message or goal to achieve?**

I consider if this is to be purely entertainment or is there a message as in gospel clowning or maybe fire safety for a

school program. In every case, I look again to make sure I Kept It Simple Stupid (KISS). I remember some of the funniest things I ever saw were everyday events with a humorous perspective. Red Skelton's Clem Kakiddlehopper was not Einstein but I laughed every show. Abbot & Lou would start who's on first and I was total captured until the finish. What makes Banana Bandana funny? I believe less is more and if one moves a little slower and gives more expression and surprise to events happening, you don't run off and leave your audience.

#### **How many players do I have to work with?**

Through a series of events I became a one-person act, so I use puppets to give variety and play some of my needed spots. Puppets don't require a ventriloquist and do leave you to learn all the lines, but they are good partners. Also, use parts of your audience when possible. Everyone is more entertained when they see friends or coworkers on the stage. Don't forget, many multi-player skits can be reassembled to work for a single clown.

#### **Is the event inside or out?**

This can affect many parts of your performance. Sound does not carry well in large auditoriums or open lots. Make sure your sound issues are addressed early. Background sounds can drown almost anything. A silent but expressive skit may be your best show. Be sure to practice extra to make all those timing things come out right.

#### **How long do I have to perform this skit?**

As a rule, the Keep It Simple Stupid rule helps here also. Eliminate useless pieces that do not follow the point you are trying to make. A building or splashy beginning can get attention and prepare your audience for the following

message. Even if you are given 45 minutes one would not usually use one skit to teach fire safety, but could drive 2-3 points during a skit and put short events around it to develop other points. Many performers and speakers milk a point until they lose their audience. Make the movement pull your audience with you and they'll be waiting for your next discovery. A surprise and unexpected end is great, but sometimes I like to have figured out where this is going and watch the skill in getting there. One has to reach a greater level to pull the last one off well. Dolly Parton's plan for a performance was, "Make'em laugh a little, and cry a little, then scare'um to death and send them home." I guess we can consider she's practiced this and done okay. She ends often with fireworks or something really loud.

#### **How much time do I have to make props?**

That simple point can be a good friend here. If there too much distraction with the scenery, your audience may not be watching you. Once a mentor pointed out that if you make a fancy screen for background you might lose the audience as they study your handy work. I had already been planning to make this curtain with a rainbow and clouds with a grass hill. For the right skit this might be useful but it is limiting. Also, props can be made out of foam or cardboard to capture the audience's imagination. Swimming noodles and PVC pipe are valuable friends. They can be quickly reshaped and light to pack and carry. Bottom line may be when easy props are not going to be enough to set the stage, maybe that KISS needs to guide you to a less complicated story.

#### **The final exam...**

**Who is my audience? Is it funny?**

Before starting the practicing, examine parts to be sure your words are easy for your audience to follow. Pretend you are reading this story to a person of the age expected to attend. A total rewrite is probably not in order but a little simpler phrasing may be good. Don't forget the organizer asked a clown to perform. There are a few pieces like a stumble or an accident that caused the player to get wet or surprised can add color and interest to a less funny skit. Try to get a good person to critique your skit. Get someone you respect their opinion, but don't let their opinion make you mad or defensive. We creative souls can be like a mother hen defending her little ones. Evaluate everything they tell you, they are helping you reach your audience. When you are confident the story is good, that smile that you wear while performing, will be from you having fun performing your craft. NOW GO BUMP A NOSE!!!!

Next JJ Deadline is May 22, 2010  
\*\*\*TCA Minutes and past Joey Journals\*\*\*  
may be found on our website at  
[www.texasclownassociation.org](http://www.texasclownassociation.org)  
Password: clowntown

## **An Evening With Leon and Oz**

How would you like to have a chance to spend an intimate evening with Leon McBryde and his new character Oz? Well, I have some good news for all of you. This year at your TCA Convention Leon has agreed to do just that.

Leon will sit down with us and do "Memories, Friends and 8x10's", a program where he will show a photo of a person or place and give us a memory that will last a life time. This will be an insight into the lives of some of the professionals that Leon AKA "Buttons" has had the pleasure of working with over the years. Some of the stories explain how hard the circus clowns worked and played. Also, how they came together as a team and the friendships that lasted for decades.

From there Leon will tell us what was involved in developing his new character "Oz", the steps he took to bring Oz to life. This will be a lecture to help you in the continuing development of your clown character. As Leon goes through the steps of character development he will be transforming into Oz. Then Oz will perform for us.





## **The Texas Clown Association—Board of Directors**

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