

The **Joey** **Journal**

The Texas Clown Association



October - November 2013



Randy Christensen
TCA Convention Headliner 2014

The Texas Clown Association Board of Directors

Diana McCurtain-Talbert, President - (210) 391-6087
8542 Rita Elena, San Antonio, TX 78250-6524
dmccurtain@att.net

John "John John" Luce, Vice Present - (817) 281-2793
7913 Standley, Fort Worth, TX 76180
JJClown@sbcglobal.net

Olivia Adamson, Secretary - (210) 373-9624
22341 Old Fossil Road, San Antonio, TX 78261
liveyot@sbcglobal.net

Mauri "Binkie" Norris, Treasurer - (713)-201-9995
6504 Kenyon Lane, Bellaire, TX 77401-3705
maurinorris@yahoo.com

Judy "Peep" Cornett, Sgt. at Arms - (713) 201-8681
8315 Ivan Reid Dr., Houston, TX 77040-1508
judy.a.cornett@gmail.com

Andy "Smiley" Anderson, Past President - (817) 282-3339
645 Forest Lane, Hurst, TX 76053
kudosra@yahoo.com

Area Directors

North Central - Martha Warren - (817) 275-8644
1507 Marshalldale Drive, Arlington, TX 76013
martha2cool@sbcglobal.net

North East - David McCullough - (903) 571-3089
P.O. Box 1017, Chandler, TX 75758-1017
kornpoptheklown@gmail.com

Panhandle/West - Kathy Keaton - (325) 944-4746
4505 Southern Oak Lane, San Angelo, TX 76904
kpiccolo28@juno.com

South/Central - Kim "Tutti-Frutti" Grice - (210) 698-8820
106 Tallow Trail, San Antonio, TX 78256
oxford@uthscsa.edu

South East - Patsy McMillan (713) 410-3698
20806 Durand Oak Court, Cypress, TX 77433
mcglitterbug@yahoo.com

THE JOEY JOURNAL

Published Bi-monthly for Members of
The Texas Clown Association, Inc.
Greg “Zoots” Stanford, Editor

Letters to the Editor, articles and other related items should be emailed to greg@joeyjournal.com or addressed to The Joey Journal and mailed to 1818 11th St., Wichita Falls, TX 76301. 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, or copies. The preferred format is a digital copy in the “jpg” or “png” format.

Advertisements: Advertisements must be prepaid and camera ready. Rates: Back cover - \$80.00; Inside back cover - \$70.00; Full page - \$70.00; 1/2-page - \$40.00; 1/4 page size - \$25.00; and a business card size ad - \$10.00 an issue.

Multiple placement discounts on ads are 5% for 3-5 editions and 10% for six editions. Payment must be received in advance.

Clownified ads: Free to members if you have clown-related items for sale or donation. Vendor businesses not included.

Publication deadlines: On or before Dec. 1, Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Aug. 1 and Oct. 1. Articles can be sent to greg@joeyjournal.com in the body of your email or in Word, Pages, or PDF format.

Membership and Dues - 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.

CONTENTS

From the President - Diana McCurtain-Talbert	5
New Members	6
TCA History - Mauri Norris	8
Convention Updates - Diana McCurtain-Talbert	9
Remembering Bobby Gibbs - Lou Flowers-Stoddard	11
Clown Noses - Randy Christensen	12
Poking My Nose into Your Business - Randy Christensen	14
TCA 2013 Was a Learning Experience - Margaret Clauder	15
Background Story of the Convention Timing - Mauri Norris	17
Plate Spinning - Olivia Adamson	21

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.

From the President

by Diana “Buttons” McCurtain-Talbert

Hello TCA Family,

I hope all of you are doing well and clowning your hearts out. I wanted to take a few minutes to share with you some information in regards to convention dates, questions and comments that have been coming my way since our last convention.

First, while at convention, several folks voiced concerns that we changed the dates without any warning to the membership. They felt we had just made the change and announced with no warning. I wanted to let you guys know that if you look back to your March-April Joey Journal, you will find that I did take time to mention the change as well as some of the reasons for the coming change in my article. I have also always invited questions and or comments to come my way, in regards to anything you feel you need more information on, but never received a single comment in regards to that update.

Second, I wanted to let you, the membership know that both at convention, and since coming home I have received quite a few comments from people in regards to the change. Some people are extremely grateful for two things, 1) that the convention for 2014 is going to be in October, and 2) it is moving out of the Dallas area. Several members have stated that they simply cannot

come to convention during the summer due to work and other personal issues.

Others have shared their great dissatisfaction with the convention moving to the fall for 2014 because work and other commitments will keep them from coming.

I say with the utmost sincerity, that I am happy for those of you who have not been able to come to convention in 3 years. I look forward to meeting you in 2014 and hope you will find me and introduce yourselves. To those who have been coming faithfully during the summer, and cannot come in 2014, you will be missed. I know that the Board cannot make decisions that will make 100% of the membership happy. I also know that the feelings about this particular topic have always been very close in regards to how many want it in the summer and how many want it in the fall. I can share with you, as I shared at our last General Membership meeting that one of the ways San Antonio was able to agree to host was by having it during the fall. We simply cannot find the space in this



area during the summer due to the high tourist season. I want you to know that I, along with the rest of the TCA Board, really do care about what you think and how you feel. While we know that some decisions will not always be popular with everybody, we are trying to do what is best for the organization as a whole. Further in this Journal, you will see a very detailed history of what has taken place in regards to convention discussions, and votes over the years. These details have been carefully put together in the hopes that it might answer any remaining thoughts, questions and concerns you have.

As always, please keep in mind that our focus is to do what is best for the majority.

I hope that this note from me, along with the historical information presented later on in this journal will

help to provide understanding of where we've been, where we are, and where we're going.

Finally, we are not locked into Fall Convention time frames. There is opportunity for it move back to summers, pending who is hosting and what will work best for that group in regards to cost in the area and availability of the members who are committing their time to hosting convention. By rotating between summer and fall, and planning far enough out it allow you the membership to better plan your attendance to convention.

I am available by phone or email if you have any questions or concerns.

Until next time,

Keep Smiling,

Diana "Buttons" McCurtain-Talbert
dmccurtain@att.net

210-391-6087

WELCOME THESE NEW TCA MEMBERS

Cindie "TOY BOX" Perry of Flower Mound, TX

Janet "MOTITA" Uscamaita of Ft. Worth, TX

Cynthia "RICE CAKE" Rice of Chandler, TX

Curt "PROFESSOR Q B" Gunz of Flint, TX

Please welcome these new TCA members. If you need contact information for any of these members, please contact me at 713-201-9995 or maurinorris@yahoo.com.

Thanks

Mauri

TCA Clown Alleys

Panhandle / West Region

Oops Alley - TCA #2

North Central Region

Cowtown Clowns - TCA #9

Happi Tymes Clown Alley - TCA #12

The Clown Arounds - TCA #16

North East Region:

Tejas Klown Club - TCA #1

Texas Mid-Cities Clown Alley - TCA #13

Payasos Latinos de America - TCA #23

Cedar Creek Clowns - TCA #24

South East Region

Space City Clown Alley -TCA #6

Montgomery County Clowns - TCA #11

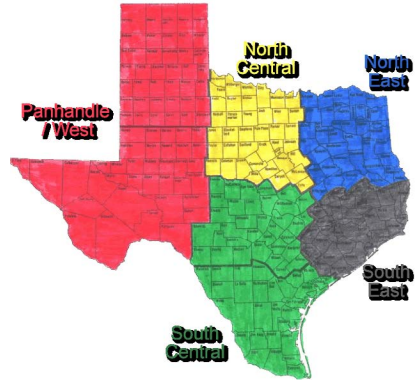
Cheerful Clown Alley - TCA #14

Coastal Confetti Clowns - TCA #18

South / Central Region

Jolly Joey Clown Alley - TCA # 19

The Clown Alley - TCA #15



KUDOS Clown and Magic

Andy and Rhea Anderson, Owners

Image Engravers, Clown and Magic Supplies

Books, DVDs, Stickers, Pins, and Personalized Nametags

P.O. Box 666

Work (817) 282-3339

Hurst, Texas 76053

Fax (817)282-3707

www.kudosclownandmagic.com



TCA History

By Mauri "Binkie" Norris

Thanks to Lou "Honey" Stoddard, I have the convention report from the very first TCA convention held in 1983 and I thought the membership might find the details interesting, these 30 years later. The report was written by Bob Stoddard (probably as part of his duties with the editing of *The Joey Journal*). Here is what it said----

The first annual convention of the T.C.A. made its way into history hosted by Texas Mid-Cities Clown Alley #85 C.O.A.

Registration was good for the first year. Workshops in make-up, magic, skits, balloonology, juggling, and ventriloquism, designed to improve the profession of clowning in Texas were well attended.

The fun parts for the clowns were the competitions at the mall. Mall director Shirley Dupree presented twenty trophies to the winners on the mall stage. Envelopes containing cash awards were presented at the awards banquet on Sat. night.

The entertainment at the awards banquet on Sat. night was furnished by the celebrated mime David Ellezy, the very funny magic of Johnny Brown, and the renowned Longview, Texas ventriloquist Joyce Wilkes.

At the business meeting Sunday morning the membership voted to award a "lifetime honorary membership" to Loncy Leake, a Mesquite lawyer for services above and beyond the call of duty; awarded the trophy for "Clown Ambassador of Goodwill for 1982" to 72-year-old Bob "Rags" Thomas of Amarillo. These awards include "Paid-up" lifetime memberships.

Everyone voted to hold the 1984 convention in Houston and elected a slate of new officers. After the election the past president Wynn Veale passed the gavel to the new President Rosalie Perryman thereby passing the duties to the new officers who were then and there charged to get to work and continue bringing about the dynamic club everyone wants.

The 1983 convention was the only TCA Convention that I did not attend (I have been at every one since then). For those of you newer to the TCA Conventions, for many of the earlier TCA conventions the various convention competitions were held at a nearby mall. This gave the local public an opportunity to see and interact with clowns and gave the clowns exposure to the general public. Logistics and changing times, with increased liability and security everywhere, have moved the competitions

into the convention hotels/venues. This removed the public access but limited liabilities and made it easier for the convention hosts (not having to transport clowns along with lots of props from place to place).

I cannot help but wish that this report had a few more specific details but still, it is nice to know that what the membership wanted 30 years ago is what many of us still want today – a Dynamic Club. If you look up the word DYNAMIC in the dictionary you will find these meanings: “Always active or changing; having or showing a lot of energy; of or relating to energy, motion, or physical force; energetic; forceful; marked by usually continuous and productive activity or change”. Sounds just like what TCA continues to be today.

Convention Updates

by Diana “Buttons” McCurtain-Talbert

I wanted to thank all of our members who attended our 2013 convention. I also wanted to thank you for giving me the opportunity to take care of your photograph and video needs on such short notice. As I stated during our Membership meeting, I am not a professional photographer or videographer, but I was very pleased with my amateur results. Also, special thanks to Greg, for providing video of all competition for me. As pleased as I was with our amateur results, I was even more pleased with the number of sales which took place. My idea for making money that I could turn around and donate back to TCA was quite a success. From the bottom of my heart, “Thank you!”

I am on schedule to have DVD's done in November. You should see them soon. I definitely learned a

lot this time around and am hoping you all will allow me to once again take care of video and pictures in 2014. I have learned a great deal about Photo Shop, and now know how to clear the backgrounds of pictures to give the overall picture a cleaner and more usable appearance. This option will be available next year for those of you who want to take your pictures and have me clean them up for professional purposes. I am also hoping to have a higher quality video camera for better quality video next year. I am looking forward to good things ahead... (If any of you want this year's pictures cleaned up, let me know and I will let you know pricing).

I also want to let you know that we are shaping up nicely for 2014. Our Headliner, Randy Christensen is signed and contracted.

In addition to that, your Education Director, Aurora “BeBop” Krause, is talking to some great folks and hoping to get a strong educational lineup. We are also looking at our vendor area, and trying to see who we can have that we haven’t had in a while... Hopefully, we will have new things in store.

The beautiful “Hill Country” of Kerrville, Texas is a great place to come and convention. It’s also a great place to bring the family! If you can afford the time before and after convention, there is a lot going on during this time of year. I will soon be providing information for you on the “goings on” in this part of Texas, during our convention week.

Please take a moment to visit

www.jollyjoeys.org and go to our Convention Tab. Very soon, you will see updated information with some pictures of the hotel, a link with attractions in the area, a Pay Pal link so that you can sign up for convention, and more.

In the next issue, we will announce the convention theme, as well as have our logo (proudly designed by none other than “The Astonishing Mr. Pitts”). This will be the logo which will be on our 2014 T-shirt. Until next time, take care. And Keep Smiling.

Diana “Buttons” McCurtain-Talbert
2014 Jolly Joeys Convention Chair
dmccurtain@att.net

Correction from the Previous Issue

The editor of the Joey Journal would like to apologize for mixing up the by-line and picture for the article “2013 Ambassador of Clowning Award” which was actually written by Patti Gilbert.



Next Joey Journal Deadline - Dec.1, 2013

Don’t forget to check out past issue of the Joey Journal on the Texas Clown Association website - www.texasclownassociation.com

members-only password: sanantonio

Remembering Bobby Gibbs

By Lou Flowers-Stoddard

One year Bobby Gibbs, an ol' circus friend of Robert and Lou Flowers-Stoddard, handed Lou a hundred-dollar bill and asked if she would buy material and make five one-hump camel blankets for the camels he was training at the Donny Johnson Circus winter quarters in Seagoville, Texas.

Bobby, as a young boy, kept running away from home to travel with the circus. But he was sent back to his home many times by the famous circus owner, Gil Grey, with the promise to let him work the show during the summer when school was out...and then a permanent job after he graduated. Bobby started out doing many different kinds of jobs, but his first regular act was working with mules that were painted with black paint stripes to make them look like zebras.

After many years of working the white mules, Bobby started working elephants. He then decided to train and work camels for Mr. Hale, a friend in Missouri, who owned many animals used by a variety of people in various circus acts, and thus arose the need for five one-hump camel blankets. Bobby would have liked to have the finest real velvet for the blankets, but he couldn't afford the real thing, so he decided to settle for the velvet look.

The next day Robert and Lou

went shopping for inexpensive velvet material for camel blankets. After a couple of days shopping in all the fabric shops in all the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex area Lou said to Robert, "Let's just go and get Bobby tomorrow and take him shopping with us." So the next day, in the very first fabric shop they walked into Bobby stopped, pointed, and said, "That's it!" When Robert and Lou saw what Bobby was looking at, they saw fake fur material. Lou's remark to Bobby was, "If we had known you wanted fake fur, we could have bought that a couple of days ago."

Fortunately for Bobby, the shop was having a sale on all their fabrics, so the guys figured the amount of material that would be needed of each color for blue blankets, gold trim and red designs. They took it all back to the Stoddard's house. Robert made the pattern, Bobby cut them out, and Lou sewed the parts together with belly belts to hold the blankets on the camels.

Robert and Bobby bought bridles from a tack dealer, and they and Lou make tassels from blue, red, and gold yarn to match their blankets to hang on each side of the camels' bridles.

Bobby thought that with the nature of camels to want to chew on things, the blankets would be
(Continued on page 23)

Clown Noses

by Randy Christensen

Noses...some are scrunched upward, some are round and bulbous, some are long and pointy, others are tiny buttons. One of the five main senses gains the totality of it's experience through this unique protrusion—the nose.

Years ago, while taking down my equipment after a church service, a father and son stood near to me observing the process. I had a long drive ahead and was focused on getting my equipment packed. The dad began to feed heckler lines to the boy. “Tell the clown that his clothes look terrible.” “Your clothes look terrible,” the child parroted.

“Tell the clown that he needs new shoes,” the man instructed. “Hey clown! You need new shoes!” the boy exuberantly proclaimed. Many thoughts ran through my mind, none of which would have been positive responses to this family duet. I was focusing on my task at hand, rather than on the child...and maybe that was part of my problem. I know they were trying to be funny, but I wasn't laughing.

Anyway, the next deadpan line came from the father: “Tell the clown that his nose looks like a rotten tomato.” The child echoed, “Hey clown! Your nose looks like a rotten tomato!”



Something clicked in my mind. “Rotten tomato?” I said, “I don't know if it looks like a rotten tomato, but it sure does smell terrible!” The child laughed, and the father smiled and chuckled. They had got what they wanted. The clown finally said something funny. They stopped heckling and went on their way. My nose had become the catalyst for comedy and connection.

Historically, it appears that the Europeans began the practice of reddening the nose of character clowns and augustes. This simply was to help give the impression that the character may have spent too much time at the pub. That would explain the physical clumsiness and the inability to understand simple instructions. The character, bluntly, was drunk. So, he would fall off of the horse. He would jump on and ride backwards, not realizing that this was a problem. He would drop props, not realizing that he was leaving a

trail of equipment across the circus ring. He would trip and fall down. (If you want to see the humor of “the drunkard” watch any of the majority of Charlie Chaplin films.) The red nose added to the impression that this character was inebriated. He did not function as a normal rational person.

The nose is one of the most important features of the clown image. It is a focal point of the face. The muscles of the cheeks, muzzle, eyes and mouth move around this immovable object. It sits like a tiny screen between us and our audience.

Years ago, Roman theater implanted the use of full masks. Centuries later, the Commedia Del Arte performers wore masks to help them depict their characters. Many of these masks were half-masks. The mask continued to shrink and diminish until now this tiny little mask sits simply on the end of the nose. This mask helps us maintain our character. Over this little mask we look over at the world. From behind this little character mask we have a unique vantage point. We still have that tiny separation from the real world. We have not quite yet revealed ourselves to the waiting public. We don't want to be “naked,” so we keep the clown nose. It enables us to release more of who we are to our audiences since we still have this tiny screen between us and the audience. There is safety for us as

we stay behind the nose.

And yet, we become far more daring as the nose also becomes a bridge to our audience. Something changes in our observer's mindset when they see the clown nose. Suddenly, I'm no longer just the “funny guy.” Now, because of the nose, I am seen as a CLOWN!

At times, when I teach classes, or do mall shows, I will introduce myself and do various presentation techniques. Then, in the middle of the show, I put on my clown nose and a bowler hat. Suddenly, the audience “buys in” to the fact that I've become a clown character. I do a circus-styled presentation and they laugh and applaud. The nose helped them, and helped me, to bridge beyond reason and become the clown.

Consider this: your nose is extremely important to the portrayal of your character. It can help you become comfortable in front of your audience. It can become a key to comedy and connection. It shows something about your character to your viewers. That little mask sitting on the end of the bridge of your nose, can help you build bridges of friendship.

Poking My Nose Into Your Business

I'm taking off the everyday me and putting on the make-up,
I'm taking off the old man, and putting on the new,
I'm covering the near-sighted me and exposing the broad-based
"everyman"
I've put on the wig and shoes to put away the blues,
I've put on the red nose so I'm ready—"Here it goes"
And I've come to put my nose into your business.

In the hospital, at your birthday party,
or walking in the park—
If you'll let me, I'll poke my nose into your business.

It may make you pause or laugh or even make you startled
For having another big nose stuck into your routine
may cause a new view of the old;
to see things brightly in a black and white world
may take some meddling and some tuning by a fool.
To help you come out of monochrome
so you may see in living color
is truly my passion
as I stick my nose into your business.

By Randy Christensen - April 2005

TCA 2013 Was a Learning Experience

by Margaret Clauder

I wish to thank the TCA board and all the members who helped with the TCA 2013 convention held in Irving at the DFW Westin hotel. It was once again a wonderful convention in a gorgeous facility and I enjoyed it so much! Having been the chair or co-chair for several past conventions, I know how much work is involved with the planning and organizing. It is a tedious and thankless job, so we must all join together in praising all the hard work from our TCA board for the last 2 years.

It was good to see old friends and meet new ones at the TCA convention. There were several clowns that I did not see there and for those of you that could not make it we missed you and you missed a good convention. I was so impressed with our headliner, Aurora Krause aka BeeBop the Clown. She is passionate about our art and it showed through in everything she did – her lectures and her performances. At first I had mixed emotions about using “home grown” talent for our lecturers. Would we draw in the attendance that was needed for TCA to break even on the convention? Would the lectures be the kind of quality we are used to? The answer to both questions was a resounding YES!



I am sometimes called upon to travel out of town to perform. It always amazes me at the reception I receive when performing out of town. It's as if one is a big celebrity because you are not “from the area.” I have seen new entertainers move into my market area and they have an immediate star quality to them because they are “from out of town”. It's interesting. So why do we not celebrate our “home grown” talent more? Texas has some of the best of the best right in our own backyard. We have had storytellers, puppeteers, magicians, clowns, face painters, and balloon artists performing and lecturing at our conventions who all live in Texas and they were all fantastic lecturers.

This convention made me think more than any other convention. Aurora said things in her

evening performance that really touched me. The thing she said that touched me the most was that as clowns we need to PERFORM MORE! I totally agree! As a group too many of us are turning into costumed balloon twisters and face painters. Pardon me for saying this, but that's NOT what a clown is all about! A clown is someone that brings laughter and smiles to others through PERFORMANCE! If we want our profession to grow then the public needs to see us PERFORM at more shows!

After the convention Alley 85 talked about putting together a show that we could have ready to perform for charities, malls, corporate events, etc. It could be a culmination of our group skits and performances that we have already done for conventions, as well as our single performances. Money earned through these performances (if any) could go into our education fund or be used to donate to charities we support. In the end it would be a win/win for all of us. Alley 85 has performed together in every group category for the last 2 years. We've placed in everything we performed in. We found that performing together did several things for us. It brought our group closer together as friends. It helped us to grow as performers. We developed new skills such as prop building. We also learned how to critique each other in a construc-

tive fashion and how to accept critique as well. Overall it was a wonderful experience. Newer people were taken under the wing of experienced people and helped to become stars in their own right.

I would also like to see more people competing for "Best All Around Clown". This should be a competition with dozens of people going for the title. As Aurora said, she takes things to convention to compete with that she wants a critique on. She then takes the judges comments and she makes her act better! It was like a hammer hit me in the head when she said that. Why put together something JUST for the competition? Why not put together skits and performances that we will actually use in public when we perform? Get those skits and performances critiqued to make us BETTER so we can be BETTER PERFORMERS! If you do this to make money either on the side or for a living, what better way to get better?

So I close with a question for you. How are you going to push yourself to get to the next level of clowning? How will you get there? Who can help? The answer is obvious to me. Is it to you?

The Background Story of the Convention Timing

by Mauri Norris

The TCA Convention Policies state that the dates for the annual convention will be set by the Board of Directors. From the beginning, in 1983, the conventions were held in the fall – September/October dates. The specific timing of the annual convention was a topic of discussion at many conventions. A membership vote at the annual membership meeting during the 2000 TCA convention set the convention dates to be from the last weekend in September through the second weekend in October annually. Still the discussion continued year after year. Suggestions continued to be heard about moving the conventions to the summertime, so a number of articles about the convention dates (the Sept/Oct time-frame versus July 15-Aug 15 time-frame) were published in The Joey Journal issues from Nov/Dec 2006 through July/August 2007. Members were invited to write to the TCA President with their thoughts on this topic and many of their comments were also published in these The Joey Journal issues.

TCA By-laws have no provision for any membership votes outside of the duly called annual membership meeting. However, the 2006/2007 TCA Board of Directors wanted to ‘hear’ from all of the

members, not just those who were able to attend a convention in the fall, so they opted to mail out a ‘ballot’ with the July/August 2007 issue of The Joey Journal to find out how the FULL membership felt. There was no requirement for members to sign or note their membership number on the ‘ballots’, so there was no way to validate the votes, but the board was able to see how members felt.

A total of 323 ‘ballots’ were mailed. Unfortunately only 77 members (less than 25%) returned their ‘ballots’. 41 voted in favor of moving the convention to the summertime, while 36 voted to leave the convention in the fall. Even considering this low response, the Board felt that they should listen to the membership and try moving the conventions to the summertime, but they retained the right to establish criteria to review the ‘success’ of the summertime conventions and if the summertime conventions failed to meet the established criteria, the board could move the convention dates back to the fall, without going to the membership for a vote.

General Membership Meeting of 9/27/2007 (Houston) -Minutes – The results of the mail-in ‘ballot’ were announced at the general membership meeting on 9/27/2007

and it was announced that the convention would move to the summertime beginning with the 2009 convention – which at that time had no host. It was also announced, that the criteria to determine the ‘success’ of the summertime convention was not yet developed but would be available by the 2009 convention.

From the Minutes of the TCA Board meeting 5/3/2008---

“In light of the upcoming change in convention dates, the Board also discussed the criteria for judging whether or not a convention is “successful.” It was decided that ideally the number of attendees should increase, but at a minimum should not decline more than 5% (of the last two conventions – which sets the benchmark at about 150). A successful convention should also consider the costs at hotels; whether or not the number of junior joeys attending increases significantly and whether or not more families attend. In order to have a successful convention the

final financial outcome must be profitable (at least no loss). The Board may also consider problems faced by the host alley concerning whether or not time change was a problem getting convention together.”

In late 2012/early 2013, since no alley had stepped up to host the 2014 convention, the board began researching possible venues. Several venues/hotels were contacted in the greater San Antonio area (Boerne, Kerrville and Seguin included). It was found that availability in the summer was very limited. This might have been a result of the late timing of the search - waiting until early 2013 to book in the summer of 2014 - ideally a host would bid 2 years in advance and have more options when searching for available venues. Also, the rates were substantially higher than what previous TCA conventions offered. (Examples: Tapatio Springs Resort in Boerne – in summer-time - guest room rates began at over \$150/night and the per day charge



Custom Clown Costumes

Carolyn Tosh

99 CR 1173
Sulphur Springs, Texas 75482
Home 903 485 3000 Cell 903 348 5520
ctosh@cumbytel.com

for the meeting space was extremely cost prohibitive. The convention center in Seguin – available only one weekend in the fall of 2014 – had a rather high rental rate, the space was not optimal and the hotels were not very convenient and their room rates were higher than desired – over \$100/night for something like the Holiday Inn Express or the La Quinta).

At the TCA Board meeting on 2/16/2013 – the board discussed the ‘success’ of the previous few conventions and the feasibility and/or viability of having the 2014 convention in the summer. The paragraph below is from the minutes of that meeting:

“Convention 2014: Discussion of having convention in Seguin, Texas. Convention committee will discuss options for location. Andy Quittner [guest] discussed time frame of convention as a concern for hotel rates. Andy [Anderson] discussed options for moving date of convention to late September-October with feedback given about attendance with junior joeys and general attendance in the past prior to the summer dates that conventions were held. Judy Cornett made a motion to have 2014 convention in late September-early October. Martha Warren seconded motion. Motion was passed unanimously.

Tyler, Texas was discussed as possibility as site for convention of 2015.”

The 2012 convention was hosted by the TCA Board of Directors and the 2013 convention was planned by a Board appointed committee of 5 members from the 2012 planning committee. Having the same people planning two consecutive conventions provided an opportunity to identify recurring problems that were not previously noted from host to host. Several areas of concern were noted with the summer-time conventions – primarily trying to secure some of the best lecturers and dealers during that time-frame. Despite our best planning to avoid conflict with other summer clown events, a number of the most popular dealers and lecturers were busy with summer camps and other commitments and mentioned that the fall time was better for their schedules. Note to the newer TCA members – the 2005 TCA Convention was all set to be held in Houston and had to be canceled on the STARTING day (after many folks had already arrived) due to Hurricane Rita and a mandatory evacuation. Unfortunately, moving the conventions to the summertime will not get them out of the hurricane season – this risk exists for the coastal areas regardless of which time-frame is used.

Members of the TCA Board, while they certainly have their own opinions, do not have a vested interest in holding a TCA convention at any particular time – summer

or fall. They are trying to look out for the best interests of the TCA membership overall. Certainly, keeping the costs down and bringing in the best lecturers and dealers serves the total attendance. Also, while there is some merit to having the annual convention at the same time each year, there are also good reasons to alternate or move between the summer and fall periodically. For example, someone who has other commitments during a fall convention time might find it possible to attend a summertime convention and vice versa. Of course this logic applies to students but can include others as well.

An effort was made to compile historical data on the last 6-9 TCA Conventions. While some details can be extracted from the financial reports, it was determined that a second convention report form is no longer being submitted by the various convention hosts (last report located was from the 2006 convention). That form would have provided data about the number of registrants, the costs for the various lecturers and the revenue from the various dealers, hotel room block and room nights booked, meals served, etc. And though it did not previously include information about the Junior Joeys, the form will be revised to include that detail. The revised form will be added to the Convention Policies and will be required from convention hosts

in the future. This information is very valuable to future convention hosts.

While the current TCA Board of Directors feels that the fall timeframe is the most appropriate for the 2014 convention, the option to host a convention in the summer-time is still available to future potential convention hosts (subject to approval by the Board as stated in the convention policies and the board is not likely to turn down a viable host application).

Until the last few years, convention host hopefuls submitted a bid to the TCA Board 2 years in advance. A return to that policy and procedure would be excellent. That lead time gives the host more flexibility in booking a venue, lecturers and dealers and more time to promote the convention and complete all of the preparations and planning needed to host a successful convention. If your alley is interested in hosting a future TCA convention, see the Convention Guidelines, Convention Policies and the Convention Bid Form posted on the TCA website and plan to submit your bid to the Board at an upcoming 2014 Board meeting.

Plate Spinning

by Olivia “Cupcake” Adamson

Plate spinning is such a fun and easy entertainment skill that can be taught to most any audiences of kids or adults. I love plate spinning! I remember when I was first introduced to it as a clown at the education portion of a monthly clown alley meeting. I wanted to learn how to do it so bad but could not get the spin of it right away, so when I went to convention, I bought myself a plate and practiced repetitively in my hotel room until I finally “got it” to spin! I’ve been hooked ever since!

Children and adults love to learn this skill. Although it is deceptively difficult, students (of all ages) feel greatly rewarded when they succeed. There are modifications that can be taught for young children.

The best plates to use for spinning are plastic and have a lip of the bottom with a dimple in the middle of the plate. The lip allows the plate to rest on the stick and the dimple ensures that the plate will spin with stabilize on a stick or upright object, even a finger!

Here are a few techniques for plate spinning:

1. The Simple Method: Hold the stick upright, with the top of it reaching chest level. Make sure you can look down and see the top of the stick. Place the plate on top of the stick, spin the plate with your

hand making it swirl with speed until it is actually spinning. You can also spread your hand over top of plate and give it a whirl to initiate the spin. Whew! There ya go!

2. The Hard Way-Using the stick to Spin the Plate: Hold the stick upright, allow the plate to rest on the lip. Keeping the stick upright, begin swirling the plate on the lip, gradually picking up speed. Once the plate moves fast enough to level out, quickly stop your wrist from moving and the plate will stabilize in the dimple and continue to spin! Whew! You did it! (with practice, of course!)

One thing I have found helpful is to hold the student’s hand and spin their plate for them so they can experience and practice with the stick upright. Some students tend to hold the stick at an angle and the plate will fall off.

Trouble shooting Ideas:

1. Try not to hold the stick too tight. Most of the spinning technique is in the wrist, but the key is to relax the shoulder and elbow when attempting to spin the plate.

2. Remind your students to hold on to the stick loosely and attempt circles at the wrist.

3. Spinning the plate on the lip is good, but moving plate to center over dimple can be a problem. The key is that the stick needs to be

stopped quickly. When the plate is moving fast, a quick jerk and stop of the stick should be done to move the plate over the dimple.

Fun Ideas to add to the skill:

1. Tossing the Plate: Obviously, one must master the above technique to move on to the more skill level. Once you plate is spinning well, keep your stick upright and gently toss the plate upright using and elbow. The plate should go straight up and then you can catch in on to the stick at the dimple when is descends.

2. Spinning the plate on your finger: (Kids love this one) Have the child point his/her Index finger to the ceiling or sky , gently slide the finger up to towards the dimple and transfer the already spinning plate on to their finger. Wala! They have the plate spinning on their “magic” finger!

3. Balancing: Once the plate is spinning you can attempt to balance the stick in the palm of your hand by cupping your hand and making it a balancing act! You can also attempt to hold the stick in your mouth with your head held back and clench our teeth around the stick to secure it upright. I have increased the circumference of my stick at the bottom with hard material to allow my teeth to clench it so that I can balance it with my mouth secure around the material.

4. Throwing and Catching the Plate with a Partner: Once both of you know how to spin the plate, toss it up and catch it with ease, you may want to include your plate spinning friend in a tossing and catching routine for fun. Stand with your partner side by side, once one of you has the plate spinning, throw it straight up but not AT the partner and allow enough room so he/she can go in for the “catch “. You may have to “refresh” the spin before you toss it back. If you drop it, who cares? Your clowns...make it a funny routine!

I have had fun with my plate spinning skill once I mastered it. I use it whenever I can to entertain in a crowd or individually. Kids of all ages love to watch and then try it out. I try to remember to bring extra plates and sticks so folks can practice. I usually get asked where the plates and sticks can be purchased. You can usually find them on clown websites, at clown conventions or just google “spinning plates” and this will connect you to a website that you can purchase them. Have fun spinning!



Remembering Bobby Gibbs

(continued from page 11)

good for only one season. But as it turned out he was able to use those blankets for three seasons, and they continued to be bright and colorful.

After that time frame, Bobby decided to go back to an elephant act, and someone else took on the camel act. So then the questions was what would happen to the white mules? Well they just retired. But as long as they lived, their skin was black where they had been painted with black paint to look like zebras, because the pigment of the paint had stayed in the pores of their skin.

Yes, the mules would always have an identity crisis, neither being able to blend in with their fellow mules, nor being accepted into fellowship by true zebras.

And such it is for all those who are separated into the lifestyle...of the Circus World.

Bobby Gibbs

4/29/39 - 7/18/04

D.R. Miller had saved a space in the Miller Circus Cemetery in Hugo, OK for Bobby Gibbs to be buried but Bobby preferred to be buried in Missouri with his mother and father. So they had two large benches placed on the lot in Bobby's memory, memorializing Bobby and furnishing a great spot for anyone to rest for a while when they are passing through.

The bench is inscribed with the words:

“Sit & let me tell you a story.”

STEVE ROESKE'S
Custom Clown Shoes

Our Shoes Are
Re-Soleable , And Custom
Made For Complete Comfort.

Phone : 321-726-8063
Steve Roeske
P O Box 120692
West Melbourne, FL 32912
Fax : 321-726-8063

PARADE ABILITY

A BILLY PRINCE SHOE

Stay Connected at the TCA website!



Log on to www.texasclownassociation.com

- **Find current Convention information**
- **Read digital copies of past Joey Journals**
- **Search the current membership directory**
- **and more!**