

The **Joey** **Journal**

The Texas Clown Association



February - March 2018



“I’m kind of a big dill”

Savannah Canales competes in paradeability at the 2017 TCA Convention.
(Read her article on page 10)

THE JOEY JOURNAL

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

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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.

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*

Rosy Nose Clown Alley - TCA #25

South East Region

Space City Clown Alley -TCA #6*

Montgomery County Clowns - TCA #11*

Cheerful Clown Alley - TCA #14

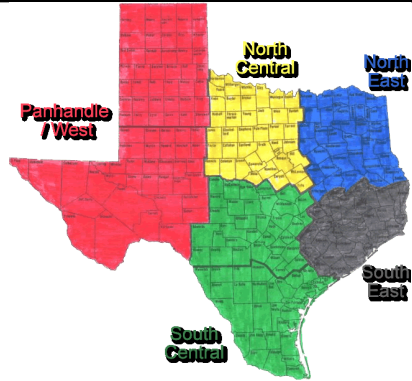
Coastal Confetti Clowns - TCA #18*

South / Central Region

Jolly Joey Clown Alley - TCA #19

The Clown Alley - TCA #15

*Inactive Alleys



Be sure to check out the TCA website at

www.texasclownassociation.com

The members only password is: daze17

Be sure to connect to our official TCA Facebook page from our website and follow us to stay current with what is going on with TCA.

A Word from the President

By Judy “Peep” Cornett

It’s 2018, and it seems to be passing faster than I can keep up. I hope each of you had a great new year and the year is promising you great things.

I hope you were warm during the cold weather in January. I was in Tulsa when the worst of the cold started so I traveled to Carthage to stay with my friend earlier than planned and had to delay my return a couple of days to allow for safe travel. Of course I got to spend longer with my friend in Carthage so I didn’t mind it. The snow was beautiful there.

Convention is fast approaching, can you believe it will be here in only 6 months? The registration rate increases by \$25 to \$200 after June 30th so if you haven’t registered please keep this in mind. The registration forms are in the Joey Journal and on the web page. Texas Mid Cities Clown Alley 85 are working hard to make it a time to remember. The TCA Board had our January board meeting at the convention hotel. They have refurbished the hotel and are excited to have the TCA Convention returning to the Westin.

Speaking about convention, we need an Alley to step up to host the 2019 Convention. If your Alley can host, please let me know. If no one steps up we may have to forego the convention. Please don’t let that happen.

I do want to remind you that we are still looking for ways to improve our convention. We didn’t get any suggestions submitted to the board for the January meeting, but you can still offer them up to your Area Director or any board member. Thank you Susan Keys for offering some suggestions at the board meeting and I did want to thank Diana McCurtain-Talbert and Susan Keys for their articles about competition in the last issue of the Joey Journal. Each of you had some good thoughts. You certainly made me want to compete. TCA is the members’ organization so don’t let your ideas sit idle, we need your input. I look forward to seeing your suggestions and ideas in the future.

This year at the convention, it will be election time again. Thanks Andy for your article in the last issue. You did a good job of giving the job descriptions and a summary of the recent by-law changes. Please contact Andy Anderson at kudosra@yahoo.com, if you would like to put your name on the ballot. TCA needs you, so please consider running.

If you would like to submit an article to the Joey Journal please email it to Greg Stanford at greg@joeyjournal.com. The next deadline for submittal is April 1st. He can always use more articles. He also loves to get pictures to include with the article.

Our next board meeting will be April 21st at 10 am. The location of the meeting has not been determined yet, but if you would like to attend please let me know and I will be sure to let you know when the location has been determined.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the Convention on August 1 in Irving at the Westin Hotel.

Annual Dues

We have added another level to the dues. They now are:

Seniors over 90 - \$20.00

Regular - \$30.00 (age 16 and up)

Family - \$20.00 (each additional adult)

Junior - \$17.50 (age 10-15 on 3/31/2017)

Payments can be made by check or card and mailed to:

Texas Clown Association

c/o Cynthia Rice

PO Box 878

Chandler, Texas 75758

Dues can be paid with PayPal at www.TexasClownAssociation.com.

If you refer someone please make sure that they list your name and TCA number on the application.

Keedo's Prop Shop: Backdrops

by Joyce "Keedo" Dowell

This month I want to talk about backdrops. They add so much to your skit. For quick & cheap



you can purchase sheets with a design already on them or white ones to draw your own pictures on. I prefer to use muslin. It is heavier and is perfect for paint applications. You may buy it at cloth stores, but I prefer a store called Stage Lights. It sells muslin in a 6-foot width with finished edges for the same price.

I hang my backdrops on a frame made of 3/4" PVC pipe. A sheet already has a hem at the top for the PVC pipe to run through. I think the people who sew call this a casing. If you use muslin you will have to sew your own casing. I allow 5" folded in half.

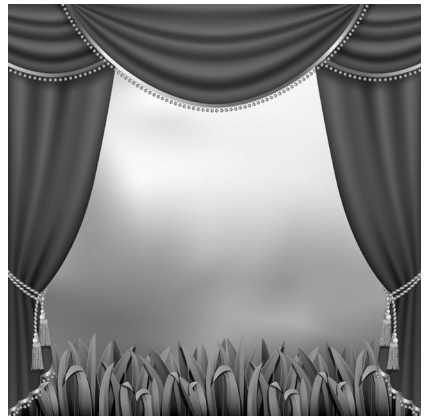
How you attach the sides of your backdrop to the PVC will depend on whether this is a one-time show or a backdrop you will use over & over. You can cut little slits to run tie wraps through. If you need to reinforce this slit make it a buttonhole. Another option found at the Dollar store is an eyelet kit that crimps in metal eyelets with special pliers. One other idea is to sew little strips of cloth to the edges to use as ties.

To paint on muslin I use the bottles of colored craft paints with a brush. You can also thin down this water-based paint and applied it with an airbrush. Spray paint is an oil-based paint that I find messy & harder to control.

To store & transport your backdrop you may fold it or roll it. For rolling buy a larger size PVC pipe and two caps for the ends to be used as a tube. You will avoid the creases from folding and it will be protected from getting dirty. Here's to a more professional look!

[Editor's note: www.rosebrand.com is a good, online resource for large size muslin]

(Reprinted from The Cheerful Chatter - Houston, TX.)



TCA Scholarship Award Recipient

by Savannah “Nannah Banana” Canales, age 14



Walking into the hotel with loads of luggage, a huge smile spreads across my face. Already seeing familiar faces in the lobby, my excitement begins to grow.

It's the best week of the year. It's "Convention time." Competitions, Balloon jams, late night snacks, and being with clowns from all over Texas is what it is all about! Learning from some of the biggest names in the clowning industry is just the beginning. It's a time to brush up on your skills and learn some new techniques. This past year I was blessed to receive the TCA Scholarship which helped me attend convention.

Clowning around always leaves a smile on my face. I try to compete in all of the events always incorporating the lessons I have learned from the past conventions. At convention my favorite thing to do is to be on stage and compete. I love looking at everyone in the audience, smiling and laughing and cheering me on. I am always so impressed with everyone's creativity, makeup, and costumes. Everyone is unique.

Some people come to convention

to hang out with old friends and reminisce, and some come with a thirst for knowledge. I guess, when I think about it, I fall into both categories. At every convention we have a themed party night. This past year's theme was "Prom Night." It was a blast. Some people showed up in real prom attire and some people came in characters of their era. We all danced and filled ourselves with cake and punch.

Leaving is always the hardest part of the week. The Art of Clowning is very important to me. Attending TCA conventions has become one of the highlights of my years. You come together with pieces of an idea and with the help of others you can leave with new inspiration in the form of a completed skit, joke or balloon masterpiece. You can always be yourself among these friends. It's like having a second family. I hope to see you all at the Texas Clown Association 35th Annual Convention in Irving.

Ambassador of Clowning Award

by Christie “Louella” McNeill

Since our next convention is August 1-5, 2018, we must begin the process of nominations for the 2018 TCA Ambassador Award early this year. All nominations need to meet these criteria:

- Nominee must be an active and current member of TCA.
- The nominee must be known for his/her dedication and promotion of clowning without personal gain.
- They should be a well-rounded clown, someone who gives to the community, is an active volunteer and who is professional in the art of clowning.
- He/she should promote TCA in all facets of clowning, should strive always to be positive, upbeat, agreeable, and have a fair attitude. Be willing to share ideas and be available to assist with a smile.

Please send your letter of nomination to me at the address at the end of this article. Your letter should contain examples of the points listed above and have details enough to describe the nominee to the committee members as if they do not know the person being nominated. Here are some examples of details to include:

- How long have they been an active member of TCA?
- Have they held any board positions or worked on any TCA committees or with their local Alley?
- How do they support and promote TCA with their clowning?
- Has the nominee exhibited extraordinary clownmanship?

- How have they shown that they are positive and sharing? Are they unselfish in assisting others and most importantly just there with no thought of being reimbursed for their time or efforts?

- How have they displayed being a well-rounded clown? Are they an active volunteer in their community and demonstrates professionalism in the art of clowning?

- How have he/she shown their dedication and promotion of the art of clowning in assisting others?

Nominations will be accepted from active TCA members only. If you would like to verify that your nominee is a current member of TCA please contact our treasurer (Cindy Rice). The nominations will be considered by the TCA Ambassador Committee which is made up of previous recipients who are still active in TCA. The Award will be presented at the Awards Banquet at the annual TCA Convention.

All nominations must be submitted in writing by e-mail or regular mail no later than July 1, 2018. Nominations received and/or post-marked after July 1st will not be considered for the award.

Please send your nominations for the 2018 TCA Ambassador Award to:

Christie McNeill
2203 Allan Court
Nederland, TX 77627
cmcneill@gt.rr.com

You Can Do This

by Susan “Tinker” and “Nurse Susie Q” Butler

“How did you start clowning?” they ask. I was inspired to be a caring clown. But what does that mean? Richard Snowberg said, “Clown wherever you can.” But where is that? And someone said be passionate about something and be compassionate. I am passionate about clowning at the hospital, but it is not for everyone AND it is not always easy. Many, many years ago there was a teenage girl that was very sick. Some days she would laugh and some days she would not respond much. Yes, I would cry all the way home-my heart was breaking! Some days after a long day at work, her mom would call, Tink, could you come to the hospital. One Sunday night her mom called, Tink, can you come to the hospital. Kristi had gotten her angel wings.

Some days the nurses say, don't go in that room she doesn't know English, so, in I go. Before long, they are laughing so hard the nurses are looking in to see what is happening.

Don't go in that room the nurses say, she doesn't speak, so in I go, she is laughing so hard and crying when I say I have to leave. The nurses are looking in again.

On a bus at Space Camp at Huntsville, Alabama, I was asked if I could teach a clown school at the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind. I sure can! Later, What did I just say!!! When the plane landed and I was walking around Romney, West Virginia, I had a word with God and He said, “You can do this!” But some of the students are deaf and some are blind! He said, “You can do this!” But for a week He said, “You can do this!” It was a blast.

Leon McBride says, when you're green you grow and when you're not you rot. So, we might not all be famous clowns, but we all have joy and love to share. Remember, as to continue to improve your clown skills, clowning is ART from the HEART!!

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TEXAS CLOWN ASSOCIATION, INC.

Membership/Renewal Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip (+4) _____

Country _____ Telephone Number _____

Date of birth _____ email _____

Clown Name & clown type _____

Other clown organizations of which you are a member:

Membership Dues

(Each new member must pay a one-time initiation fee of \$5)

Regular = \$30 Family (*) = \$20 Junior = \$17.50 (10-15 yrs) Senior = \$20 (over 90)

(*) Each additional family member after the first Regular member

(*) Name of family that is current "Regular" Member _____



TEXAS MID CITIES CLOWN ALLEY 85

invites you to the

Texas Clown Association 35th Annual Convention

August 1-5, 2018

ALL convention registrants must be current TCA members.

See the TCA website for a membership application.
www.texasclownassociation.com

REGISTRATION FEES:

\$145 until 12/31/2017

\$175 1/1/2018 – 6/30/2018

\$200 after 7/1/2018

(No refunds after June 30, 2018)

Registration per person includes: all scheduled workshops and shows, jams, daily admission to the dealers room, competitions, hospitality room, Saturday awards banquet and Sunday breakfast

\$145 JUNIOR JOEYS

Name: _____

Clown Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

How Many Years A Clown? _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

TCA # _____ (registrants must be TCA members)

Is this your 1st TCA Convention? Yes ___ No ___

(ages 10-15)

Juniors enjoy all the same convention events and activities as the adult registrants, plus special classes geared for younger clowns.

CONVENTION FEES:

Registration (see right side) \$ _____

Extra Banquet Ticket \$45each \$ _____

Extra Breakfast Ticket \$30each \$ _____

T-Shirt Size _____ \$20 \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

ISSUE and MAIL Checks to:

**TCA Convention 2018
P. O. Box 154791
Irving, TX 75015-4791**

**The Westin Dallas/Fort Worth Airport
4545 W John Carpenter Frwy, Irving, TX 75063**

Room Rate: \$99 plus taxes and fees.

Up to 4 people per room, includes WIFI and parking
To book your room, contact the hotel at
www.westindallasfortworthairport.com

or call 972-929-4500.

Tell them you are with the Texas Clown Association. Make your reservation early to ensure you have a room. Please plan to stay at the convention hotel to help Mid Cities meet its room block and save money on the convention meeting space.

Watch [www. MidCitiesClownAlley.com](http://www.MidCitiesClownAlley.com) for more convention information, as details become available.

Questions? Contact:

Cinde "Boopsie" Sanders 214-796-8122 magicinde@hotmail.com

Susan "Dubble Bubble" Keys 214-912-8448 merrymakers1@juno.com

Total enclosed (fee plus \$5, unless renewing) _____

TCA Member who referred you:

Name	TCA #
------	-------

Mail completed application and fees to:

Texas Clown Association, Inc
C.O. Cynthia Rice
P.O. Box 441
Chandler, Texas 75758

Old Magic Books are Truly Magical

by Greg “Zoots” Stanford

It's not a secret, I love books. Specifically, I love old magic books. Now, my collection is still in the beginner stage, but I enjoy adding to it, when I can.

I like to read interviews and bios of more experienced magicians and see what books inspired them when they started or are their go to books now. I then will start searching the Internet for the title or the author and see what I can find. I've stumbled onto some gems for a few dollars.

I think I love the older books because they so often go into such detail on the theory behind the trick and often how to build it yourself. In years past, there was no Internet and unless you were blessed to have a magic store in your area, you either mail ordered it or made it yourself.

Just this week I received a copy of Rice's Encyclopedia of Silk Magic, Vol. 1, from 1948, in the mail. It's so awesome. It's packed, packed full of information and the illustrations in the book are works of art. I was reading an article by illusionist Duane Laflin, and he made reference to the book from his earlier days in magic.

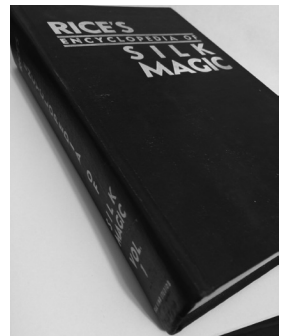
The Tarbell Course in Magic is another gem of a resource. I once read the Harry Houdini had a set of the reference books at his home

and he traveled with a set. I've got a copy of the first volume, and hope to one day complete the set...some old books are expensive. :)

More and more, you can find the text of these old books in digital format which is great when re-searching and planning, but there's nothing like holding a book in my hands while flipping through the pages written in years past.

So if you are looking for ways to spice up your show by using one of your magic props in a different way, check out the trick in an old magic book. As you explore the workings of the trick, your creative juices might help you find new ways to use the trick. And some times, old is new. Young people haven't seen that trick before, or done that way.

That's not to say all my books are from decades past. No, there are tons of great books out there, more being written as we speak. But there's something about the old one. Old magic books truly are magical.



Bubbles, Bubbles, & Bubbles (That's For Me)

by Nancy "Bubbles the Clown" Arnet

Hello my fellow clowns, this is Nancy-Bubbles the Clown-Arent. I have been the editor for last 9 years for Cowtown Clowns Alley #135 Hurst, TX. We have a Big Red Nose it All article every month to read and if you guess the right answer, you get a certificate.. It's just for Fun!! (And to see if they read the Big Shoe.) So I am sharing one of the articles that I wrote one time. With Spring just around the corner, we need to start thinking ahead what we are going to do to spread some Smiles..

Have you ever been at a Birthday Party, Special Event or a Gig for your Alley and notice that people aren't having Fun? Now most of you have their own ideas for getting people in the festive mood, but in case you run out of ideas, you can't beat having some type of Bubbles to blow around.

There are the Touchable Bubbles, which are good for nursing homes and hospitals. Any small type of bubbles that you can carry in your pockets are really good too.

When you are in a patient facility, try wearing a funny shower cap & bring a sponge on a rope, use a clip board and act like their name is on it. Tell them you are in charge of the Free Bubbles Bath , and they were so good they are being awarded one today. This should bring a Laugh or too! Use you Imagination.

When you are at a company picnic, gig, etc. bring a Bubble Machine,(there are so many inexpensive ones out there that you can buy today and it runs on batteries, so you aren't breaking your budget) This helps occupy the kids waiting in line for face-painting or balloons.

So go ahead, Try it sometime it might make you feel good too , seeing them having a good time. REMEMBER you are never too old for Bubbles (no pun intended) Enjoy!!

PS-If you aren't having Fun, you are doing something wrong!

"Being a normal person is getting way too complicated, So just be what you are-" A CLOWN!!

Rustlers Rhapsody

by Joe “Tiny” Luce

It was a sweltering Texas summer morning. Aromatic smoke drifted out of trailer mounted mega-smokers in the parking lot. Steely-eyed professional cook teams watched us approach. My clown partner B-Bob cast a tall slim shadow next to my short portly one. The competitive tension was as thick as the smoke in the air as we passed through the adult BBQ teams to the arena for the junior competition. A pit manufacturer had contributed miniature versions of their classic smoker for each contestant, and our job was to entertain the children as they cooked for this mini-contest. Our hopes for a light hearted morning with the kids were dispelled when we caught sight of those same steely-eyed parents entering with their happy-go-lucky kids. We made balloons and clowned around with the little cookers anyway, but I don't think the parents liked us distracting them. It seems there was way more at stake here than just a blue ribbon for the kids – parents bragging rights!

I should mention at this point that in any competition of this type a lot of effort goes into keeping the contestant's entries anonymous while being judged and the food must be discarded after it is tasted. A few balloons and jokes later the cooking is over and the judging is well under way. Meanwhile B-Bob and I were really hungry after being enveloped in this

heavenly aroma for hours. We had another gig right after this one and there was no time to stop and eat. Since my partner was Boss Clown I goaded him into getting some food for us. A well-intentioned (but ill-informed) volunteer presented us with a Styrofoam carton of great smelling food to take with us. We were packing up to go when we detected a “disturbance in the force” around the judge's table. Apparently the winners had been decided on paper, but there was some difficulty in finding the actual numbered containers to match with the junior contestants names. A search was called for, a posse was organized, and before you could say “finger-licking-good” the lost cartons were spotted stuffed into the clown's bags as they unwittingly prepared to escape with the first and second place entries!

We were quickly surrounded by those unsmiling parents who did not see the humor of this honest mistake. After all – the authenticity of their child's championship had been called into question! We sheepishly surrendered the meat, trying to explain we were not cattle rustlers when a voice from the back of the mob said “Get a rope!” We escaped physically intact, with only the loss of our dignity – but what's dignity to a clown, anyway? Even though it was not our finest hour, we now had a great “clown moment” to share with our colleagues, and most of it is actually true!

Preparation for All Around Clown

by Martha "Miss Cookie" Warren

It's always difficult for me to fathom the month of September being here so quickly! After New Years it quiets down a little, then the Spring holidays start, there's our very busy summers, then WaLa the kiddos are back in school. Labor Day weekend is here, and the temperatures drop 50 so it almost feels like Fall...HA! That part I made up. Now it's the first of September and it's time to look forward to our TCA convention!!! What? Already? Am I ready? Last year I decided to go out for All Around Clown! My whole summer was jammed so it was only a thought in the back of my mind.

With jobs, having my grand kiddos and traveling to Galveston a couple of times, Clown Jam, family...All the busy things most of us entertainers go through! But the thought was still there...It was almost September and I still wanted to go out for All Around Clown!!!

My strategy was to do it last year 2017 while the Houston clowns were too busy putting on a fantastic TCA Convention; they wouldn't be competing! How could this not work? Well because, time was getting away from me!

I knew very well that I could be setting myself up to fail. Only two weeks before convention, I haven't started to plan! I was insane! No, I am insane! Why am I still considering this? Well, I love a good chal

lenge, and for me, it's determination whether you win or lose. I really wanted to do it!

So I decided to take on the task!!! My thoughts went out to the other alleys, who in my mind, are so creative and they always work so well together. They always start preparing for the next year, I'm sure that Saturday night, after they've taken 1st Place in all the categories! Houston, MidCities, and Midland you know who you are!

There are ten categories. I started preparing the ones I thought were my strengths; like face painting. I practiced diligently on my balloons.

Those that know me know I need private tutoring from Tricia Gregory! Ha!

Then I was stuck on what to do for single skit, it just wasn't working. OMG!

Okay, I went on to multiple skits and talked to my co-conspirers! We had a plan...that actually in hindsight, didn't end up being a good



plan!

Ideas started flowing for parade-ability, make up, and the rest. My friend, MaryCanary came over to give me pointers on my single skit. Things were coming together, but I was frazzled and didn't know what to do with everything...until my light bulb went on! I lined up ten (10) big brown bags!



Each outfit, props, & accessories went into a bag for each category. Now, I could breathe a little, and felt organized! Two days before we were leaving, I was still working on a couple of props and practicing. When I look back at what I did I have come to the conclusion the Houston and Midland clowns are doing it right! It takes a lot of thought, planning, preparation, and practice to take on such a task. Was I ready?

No not really, I almost scrapped a couple of the categories. There were two or three I know I should of

done better in. But the experience alone for me was exciting, fun, and all worthwhile!

If you are a new Joey clown, this is a great opportunity to learn and grow in your clowning, finding out what you've got, and how to use it! You never fail by trying! My advice to you though, or anyone wanting to go out for "All Around Clown",

is to start early and give yourself plenty of time to plan. Organize all your things, and practice, practice, practice, and practice some more. Challenge yourself and don't be afraid to fill your own shoes!!! Success is loving life and daring to live it!!!
maya angelou

Did I get the All Around Clown award? YES I DID! I was so excited, happy, and very honored. I accomplished a goal I set out to do! And if I can help any of you please don't hesitate to ask me...I am always here!

Still Dumbfounded

by Christie “Louella” McNeill

Have you ever been so surprised that you were rendered speechless? That is what happened to me at TCA 2017 in Montgomery when I received TCA’s Ambassadors Award, I still don’t have the words to express my gratitude to those fellow clowns who thought I was deserving of this award. I find it very humbling to stand among the previous recipients. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that my efforts were worthy of The Ambassadors Award. My plaque hangs where I am able to see it everyday and it still surprises me when I see it.

I would like to thank my sweet friend Diana “Buttons” McCurtain-Talbert for initiating my nomination and all the past Ambassadors for their votes. I am not sure how or why but Diana thinks I know “everything “ about TCA, please don’t tell her but it’s actually Mauri “Binkie” Norris that knows all things TCA. Diana is the 2016 Ambassadors Award recipient so it was especially touching that she was who presented me with the plaque and tiara.

I have been a member of TCA since 1989 and I truly love this wonderful organization. My level of involvement has varied over the years from only attending conventions to holding several offices on

the board of directors, to being the competition chair, to helping plan several of our conventions. I was introduced to clowning by my cousin and friend Mauri ”Binkie” Norris, I attended my first clown convention with her as a non-clown. It was the TCA 1985 Convention in Corpus Christi and the theme that year was “Clowning Is Catching”, guess who caught the clowning bug. My first makeup lesson was at Mauri’s dinning room table with her and Charlie “Whispers” McBride supervising, WOW you just can’t get better advice than that. I am also a proud member of Cheerful Clown Alley, and COAI and served on the board of each.

So again thank you for this most prestigious honor and I will do my best to represent TCA as an Ambassador. I look forward to seeing everyone in Irving at TCA 2018.



To Compete or Not to Compete – Part II

By: Diana McCurtain-Talbert

The Competitor's Perspective – Preparing for Competition.

Why do people decide to compete when going to convention? The reasons are varied and can be different for every person. Some people like the adrenaline rush. Some people like to do something fun with their clown friends. Others want to get feedback on a performance they have been working on, and still others want a medal at the end of the week. Whatever your reason for choosing to compete there are some things you want to be aware of as you prepare for competition.

1. Decide which areas you plan on competing in.

2. Once you decide which areas you plan to compete in, go to the TCA website and download the latest competition manual. Read it. Read it again. Read it again. You should know every rule that applies to the areas you are competing in so that you can begin to formulate your competition piece to fit that criteria.

3. Be as original as you can be. If you are going to do something that has been done before, put an original spin or twist to it. Make it your own.

4. Practice, practice, practice. An audience and a judge can tell if you have put time and energy into your performance.

5. After you have put your routine together, get feedback from someone, then polish it up for competition.

6. Once at the convention, take the time to go to the competitor's meeting so that you can ask any other questions you might have before the big day.

7. Make sure you have props, and music (maybe even a second copy of music), sometimes problems happen with audio – be prepared!

8. When making props, think about how you can make those everyday people things clowny.

9. Don't depend on the props to be funny. Depend on your character. Think about your voice, facial expressions, body movement and the use of the space you have on the stage.

10. Connect with the audience. Take the time to look at them, build a relationship with them, this draws them in and makes you real to them. Good luck to all of you as you begin preparing for TCA 2018! Bump a Nose!

Diana "Buttons" McCurtain-Talbert

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A Clown's Life

by Martha "Miss Cookie" Warren

I am so proud to be a part of the clown alley's in the Dallas/Fort Worth area! There are 3 in our area. The MidCities '85 in Irving, Cowtown Clowns in Hurst, and Happi Tymes Clowns in Arlington. I've been an officer of all 3 alleys, and now President of Cowtown, and oversee programs for both Cowtown and Happi Tymes. As I prepared the end of year list for our Happi Tymes Eddelman Award I realized how many gigs our members actually participated in.

The Eddelman Award is our top award for Happi Tymes given to a paid member who exhibits personal development, shows enthusiasm in the name of clowning, and contributes time of service to the community.

Our alley, like most alleys, have a number of clowns, usually the same ones, who come out and participate in the alley events.

I send out the Happi Tymes newsletter to all of the alleys. That way if a clown wants to participate at a gig that's in their area, they maybe more inclined to do so, and are more than welcome! Several of our members are "dual" members who attend two or all three of the alleys. We as clowns participate in as many events a month that we physically, emotionally, or are enabled to do!

Last year we had over 12 gigs that

came through our alley, not counting personal gigs we help each other with. We have the Lion's Club, we participate in at least 2 of their pancake breakfasts. There's Dark n the Park—a Happi Tymes fundraiser, Big Red Nose Day, where we visit at least 2-3 venues, International Clown week we set up a couple of nursing homes, the Clubhouse for Special Needs, the fire dept, police dept, a community center, and several other facilities during that week. It's important that the community knows the clown alleys are out there for us to get recognition.

All three clown alleys have their annual gigs so we try to participate in as many as possible in the metroplex. Many of these events we meet people, young and older, who are interested in clowning. This is when we can reach out to the young people and try to recruit! Like the old VCR players, clowning is going to be an obsolete art if we can't get the younger people to join in and learn the art! We share and invite, so to reach even one would be triumphantly great to continue the art! It would be a sad day to see the Art of Clowning disappear!

I'm finding many of our new clowns, especially the young ones, are mostly interested in face painting, balloons, and even juggling, plate spinning, and more acrobatic type of entertaining. Improv is very

popular among the young....Well they are younger, more active, and agile!

Being the program chair for 2 of the alleys, I'm always looking for something different, and things outside the box to offer for all ages! I always have my "thinking" cap on, and my clown eyes open!!! It's very challenging, but satisfying to get good programs...and you can't please everyone! But doggone I will sure try!!!

Many of us are getting past our youth...what, around 68 (?), we are looking for a new beginning. There is a clown life after birthday parties! I'm finding my interest is gravitating to the seniors...since some of my clown friends "rudely" call me that! hahahaha laugh, smile, grin! To keep the alleys alive I look for programs that might spark the mature clowns interest! Such as puppet shows, fun magic for kids and seniors, and everyone loves music!

As you can see our clown alleys stay very busy! Not all programs will interest you, but I really feel it's important to support your clown al-

ley. You just might learn something new, from something you've seen before!!! Or better yet, you are gathering with your clown friends and having fun!!! So attend your clown alley and share your ideas!

This year my goal is to get my Laughter program out to as many senior centers as I can. I've been scared to death to get outside my birthday party box and start something unfamiliar to me. But it all goes back to knowing who you know in your alleys, among your clown family!

Sharing ideas, supporting one another, and just ASK for help! I have visited a few places already this year, with the help of another clown, and I'm proud to say, I have started booking my program!

So where is your clown life going? What's happening in your clown alleys? A clown's life can be as busy as you want it to be! Be creative, think outside your birthday party box, do things in your alley to include everyone...And spread the joy, smiles, and love!



Don't wait around, get registered for the 2018 TCA Clown Convention, hosted by Mid Cities Clown Alley. Head over to midcitiesclownalley.com/tcaconvention for more info!