

3-Ring News

Volume II, Issue 4

September 9, 2019

Never Stop Dreaming!

"I Have a Dream".....I'm sure you are probably all familiar with the iconic speech of civil rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr. during the March for Freedom in August of 1963. As we look forward to our "Disney Dream" adventure at this year's Round-Up, I have a simple question for you. What is your dream? When I was young and more adventurous, I had a great many dreams. I have a very vivid imagination, so my dreams were pretty lofty and unrealistic. When I was in 6th grade and won the school spelling bee, I was sure one day I would grow up to be President. I was elected Assistant Chief Joey at the last Round-Up, so that kind of makes me President-elect in the MCA world...does that count? My point is that at some time in all of our lives we've had some pretty big dreams. Maybe you've achieved everything you've ever dreamed about. Congratulations! You are one in a bazillion! As far as I know, none of you have won the lottery, set sail every weekend on your own personal luxury yacht, fly off to places unknown in your top-of-the-line private jet, are included on Forbes' list of wealthiest Americans, or live on a private island. (If this is you...wanna be my friend? LOL!)

Maybe you've achieved SOME of your life goals, but still have unfulfilled dreams. We all have them. Hopes and dreams. Grand plans for life. Vision boards and goals. A bucket list. I think it's safe to say there is probably some dream down through the years that never became a reality for each and every one of us.

If you are one of those lucky ones who IS living their dream, I won't lie...I'm jealous. The truth is, out of necessity, many of us forego chasing our "dream job" for one that pays the bills. For others, we think we've found our dream job, and then our dreams and priorities change. What I longed for in my 20s is no longer relevant, or even appealing. At 22, I dreamed of conquering the world...at 53, I dream about getting out of bed without groaning! You know what I mean? As we grow, mature and live life, our goals and priorities evolve and change right along with us, whether they're practical or far-fetched. Or, as it tends to happen all too often, we just get tired or impatient and give up on our dreams.

So, for purposes of this article, my question is, "What is your dream for your clown character?" For your clown community? For the future of this art form you have chosen to invest in? Face it. We tend to spend a lot of time and money on chasing a dream....on those things we are passionate about. Even if you've only been clowning for a few short months, you have ALREADY invested quite a bit of time, money and effort into your clowning. And if you've been clowning for years, you have probably lost count of all that you've invested. A professionally made costume and custom shoes can cost \$600 or more, while a well-supplied face painting kit can potentially cost just as much. You can spend days learning to



juggle and countless hours perfecting a routine or magic trick. If you are passionate about clowning, it probably eats up a lot of your resources, both in time and money. But is there ever a point in clowning that you stop and say, "Okay, I've done it! I've achieved my dream!?" Maybe accumulating the points you need in competition to be inducted into the MCA Hall of Fame is your dream come true? Being nominated and accepted for a Lifetime Achievement Award? Winning All-Around Clown? Some of you rely on clowning for your livelihood, and your dream might be to book paying gigs 22 days out of every month. So, when you reach this goal you've set, do you stop dreaming? Do you ever get to a point in clowning where you think, okay, I have no dreams left?

Well, I personally, hope I never get to that point. Lou Jacobs, one of the world's most famous clowns, was credited with saying, "The day I stop learning about clowning is the day they put me in the grave." I don't care how skilled you are or how many times you've taught a workshop on a particular subject of which you consider yourself to be an expert, you can ALWAYS learn something new. If you stop growing, you start dying.

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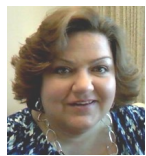
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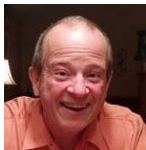
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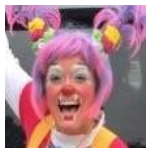
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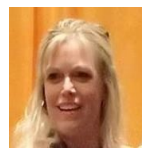
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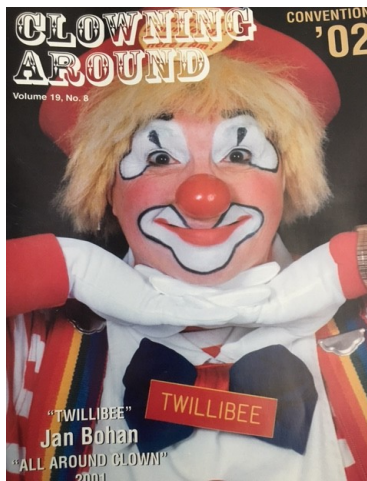
Midwest Clown Association strives to recognize and reward not only those individuals who compete and win at conventions; but also those individuals, living and deceased, who have contributed time, effort and dedication to the Midwest Clown Association and the clowning profession in general. This year's Lifetime Achievement Award recipients are:

Jan "Twillibee" Bohan

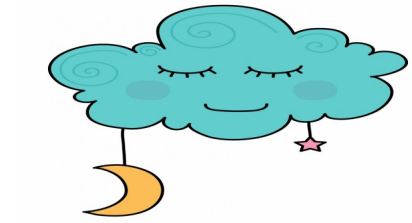


Jane "Dotty" Swiggum

CONGRATULATIONS! And thank you for your contributions, example and leadership that have helped us ALL become better clowns!



Thomas "Cappy" Cass



Sleepculture.com indicates that "When you dream about clowns, it may indicate that you have a need for more light, humor and fun in your life. You may want to let your hair down and have more fun and be more fun to be around. It could also be that the clown is pointing to the fact that you exaggerate certain things in your life."



The MCA Hall of Fame Award recognizes those individuals in the Midwest who excel in competitions. Our Hall of Fame Inductees for 2019 are:

Harry "Max" McCullaugh

and



Juan "Frijolito" Reyes



CONGRATULATIONS, Gentlemen! Very well deserved!!

Missing the Circus

A poem by Brian "Gunky" Waltman

As I sit and dream of days gone by
My mind ponders, Why, oh Why?
Why did the circus close up shop /
The circus train has made its last won-
drous stop.

Time for the juggler to put away his
clubs.
Time for the ringmaster to hang up his
fancy duds.
The beautiful show girls, glitter no
more.
Trapeze artists are no longer sore.

The lions are snuggled lonely in their
dens.
The elephants and menagerie, no
longer penned.
The roustabouts no longer work for a
few dollars a day.
The colorful funny clowns no longer
play.

Where will the magic and mystery be?
Well, dear friend, truth is, it still lives
inside of you and me.
We all must come to terms with
change, I guess you could say.
But search for wonder and amaze-
ment is a challenge each day.

You have within you the power to
amaze.
Laughter can be made in so many
ways
A smile, a trick, a balloon or a
laugh.
Fall down once, take a pie or make
a gaff.

You are the clown, now, what will
you do ?
To make someone giggle, chuckle
or spew,
Start with one person, someone
random today.
Start with a smile, a touch and con-
vey
All that is good, happy and funny in
some simple way.

There is a reason we were put on
this earth,
To give others joy, laughter and
mirth.
Though the circus has folded up its
tent canvas doors,
Life goes on, needing laughter, light
and wonder... that much more!



2019 COMPETITION FACE PAINTING SUBJECTS

Flowers
Princess Crowns
Pirates



Sadly, no alleys (group of clowns) were able to pull together a bid for hosting our 2020 Round-Up! But no worries! The current Board is committed and knows that "the Show must Go on!" We are working hard to secure the hotel and work up ideas for 2020 to give everyone a GREAT Round-Up! Still in negotiations, but we can say for sure that rates will be comparable to this year's rates, and we're putting together some exciting ideas to make it a memorable week!!

Have you checked out the changes on our website? We've tried to make it a little more streamlined to help you find what you are looking for. It is a work in progress and we are still making changes little by little. If you have a group picture of your alley, we would love for you to send it, to post under our Alley Members category. We currently have Michiana Clowns and Krazy Clown Klub, but would love to see more of you! If you have other fun items to share for our Alley page, please send it along! You can e-mail to Angela Gonzalez at angela.gonzalez@indy.gov.

www.midwestclownassociation.org

TAKING THE FINAL WALKAROUND

Remembering those who have paved the way for our big feet!



Lorane "Swanee" Abramson passed away on July 7, 2019 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Lorane served as secretary for the Midwest Clown Association from 1978-1986. She was trained in ballet and tap as a young child and even shared the stage and tapped with Bill "Bojangles" Robinson in New York City. She attended and graduated from the St. Paul School of Art and Design. She had an award winning career in clowning. As "Swanee the Clown," following her passion by bringing laugh-



...Never Stop Dreaming

Continued from Page 1

I believe that there are several reasons people give up on a dream. They feel it is unattainable and they will never reach it. They become impatient and settle for less. Their priorities change and it's no longer important. And the worst of all, they stop dreaming altogether.

My main clown character, Q.T. Pie, is fully developed, but I still have dreams for her. Yes, there are some dreams I've given up on with regard to my character, as well. I SO wanted to learn juggling, but quickly found out after several classes and practicing, that I am just too clumsy and uncoordinated and cannot get more than one rotation with silk scarves. But, you know what? I'm an Auguste clown. People don't expect Q.T. Pie to "get it right." She's a silly, bumbling, mischievous character who usually has to learn a lesson the hard way. When I realized that I had skewed Don "Homer" Bursell's juggling class success rates and that my dream of juggling bowling balls was probably never going to come to fruition, I took my ineptness with that skill and wrote a skit about it to use in my ministry clowning, teaching people to use the natural gifts they are given to glorify God. I no longer "dream" about juggling. Now, I dream about playing the ukulele. I was inspired by Tricia Manuel who, after years of successful clowning as Priscilla Mooseburger, added a new character and the ukulele to her routine a few years ago. And then there's Terry Sherwood, who just picked it up and began taking lessons this year. I just adore seeing how excited she gets on Facebook on ukulele lesson days! Folks, it's never too late to dream a new dream.

Beyond my own personal clown character, though, I also have dreams for the clown community and what "seems" to be a dying art form. My dream is to see the Midwest Round-Up attendance double in the next three years. That's why I ran for Assistant Chief Joey. I want to spend my next few years on the board focused on publicizing the Midwest Clown Association and growing our numbers. I want to see clowns who've stopped coming



regain their passion and return to dream a new dream. I'd like to see our alley membership increase through the addition of new alleys. I'd like to see our alleys grow their numbers by holding local classes and training new members, and I'd like to see MCA be a "resource" for our alleys to do that in their own communities. I'd like to see passion re-ignited in some of our members who may come to the Round-Ups to see old friends, but really aren't interested in attending classes, learning something new, challenging themselves to compete, volunteering to teach or serve, or running for a board position.

We've all agonized over the "creepy clown" culture that seems to be growing that makes it hard for professional clowns to make a living. I feel deeply for my friends who face this hardship. As a ministry clown, I have agonized over neighboring churches that think a "clown ministry" would be fun for the kiddos, so they purchase a bunch of Halloween make-up and Goodwill mismatched clothing to dress up a few middle-schoolers, who then set about to "entertain" and essentially babysit without any training. While their intentions and motives are good, it often leads to giving clown ministry a bad name and painting us all with the same brush. I can't tell you how many times I have heard the patronizing "Oh...you're a "ministry" clown?" within the professional clown community...and it wasn't meant as a compliment. And I get it. I can understand where they're coming from. I don't "make a living" as a clown and almost all my clowning gigs are ministry-related; but I'm a firm believer that a ministry clown should still strive to be professional. I seek out as many educational opportunities as my vacation schedule, family obligations, and my budget allows. I look for other ways to learn, by watching videos, reading books, talking to my mentors and other experienced clowns. I spend a lot of time in practice and rehearsal. I learn new face painting techniques, research new products, and find and practice new designs to add to my repertoire. Likewise, with balloons, I look for new ideas on some old twists and try to learn new figures. I pay attention at events when kids ask for a paint design or a balloon

I'm not familiar with, and then I go home and watch cartoons (okay, that's for me!), search the internet, or seek help from my Facebook friends to familiarize myself with these images and come up with an offering I can add to my next event. I try to pick up some new skills (ukulele) or buy/make a new prop or magic trick to use in a show or as a walk-around. I write new skits or invent new routines/gags. And most importantly, I practice, practice, practice! Because, you see, for me personally, my dream is that one day other professional clowns will walk up to me and say, "Oh! You're a ministry clown!?"...but this time with awe, wonder and admiration. I can already see it changing from when I started...two ministry clowns, father and son duo Randy and Ben Christensen, are two of the three World Clown Association's "Master Clowns." A high honor. And many other ministry clowns, like Desi Payne and Norm Barnhart have won WCA All-Around Clown titles, proving that ministry clowns can "compete with the big dogs," as they say. Our own Janet "Jelly Bean" Tucker has served in various capacities, both in WCA and MCA, including the President/Chief Joey for each organization, and she is my go-to mentor for ministry clowning! There are so many more around the country I could mention who use their clowning for ministry who are excellent performers and extremely professional, and plain and simply a joy to watch...Brenda Marshall, J.T. Sikes, Angel Contreras, Don Bursell, and Chagy (just to name a few). My dream is that maybe one day, for some young new enterprising ministry clown, I might be included in their list of names of those who have inspired and encouraged them.

So, whatever you use your clowning for...stop a moment and think about where you want to go...what you want to be...who or how you want to influence those who come behind. And most importantly, NEVER STOP DREAMING!!

Work
HARD
DREAM
BIG
Never
GIVE UP

Where Have You Been? It's Almost Round-Up!

As I sit here looking at the calendar, I realize we are just under a month from the Midwest Clown Association Round-Up!!

I had to miss last year, due to relocating and a new job. Let me tell you, it was so surreal as I sat at my new computer with the schedule pulled up and kept thinking: my friends are teaching this class, Make up competition is starting; I wish I could see what my friends have put together. Jim Caffery is teasing Lynnette right about now. Robbie is collecting the sign up buckets for the next competition, Oh Man, I am missing SKIT COMPETITION! I also found myself wondering who placed in the competitions on awards night.

After attending regularly for many years, I genuinely missed everyone and everything about the convention.

Reflecting on those thoughts and feelings, I wondered...How do clowns who have attended convention in the past, just drift away and not come back. Why do they not attend, compete or just come back to see old friends?

I suppose there are many reasons, some move away, some have health issues, some have just lost interest in clowning, some don't have the money to come, but some just choose to stay away. Why is that? Yes, it costs money to attend. I totally get that!! Personally, I try to budget a little money each month, just so I can attend the convention.

But why would someone choose not to be a part of a wonderful regional gathering of clowns? Maybe they think no one misses them? Well We do!! More clowns equals more creativity, bright colors, sense of wonder and joyful personalities!

Some of the reasons I like to go are: It is a thrill to see what people have come up with in the competitions. The beauty and colors of whiteface and auguste costumes, even the depths of drab colors of the tramps. I

love the creativity of the balloon sculptures and face painting artists. I never want to miss the funny alley, group and single skits. Skit night for me, is the pinnacle of convention! I feel skits are the place creativity and comedy truly come together and are on full display for the entire audience.

I also like to go to reconnect with friends I haven't seen in a whole year. I love to see what comedy gem John Hanewall and Wayne Rongholt have come up with. Then of course there is Jim Caffery's unique wit. Angie Gonzalez, Annette Darragh and Irene Spudic are just lovely people to be around. I am in awe of the creations of James Kuhn and Mick Spudic.

Many clowns are icons of clowning. I love to soak up the wisdom and experience of Robbie Levensbaum and Janet Tucker. It is a joy to watch the eagerness of the junior joeys and see them get a taste of performing in front of their peers.

The people above are just a few individuals who I thought everyone would know and could relate to. But in reality, I LOVE to see each and everyone of you!

As you can see, PEOPLE are at the HEART of the convention! These relationships have been forged over several years! That can't happen if clowns don't come back. There is a genuine void when someone is no longer attending. I can tell you, last year, It felt like there were a hundred clown size holes in my psyche missing each and every one of you!

In addition to the relational aspect, I find that the Midwest Round Up is a great way for each of us to become better clowns. We can inspire each other through performance and competitions. We also learn from each other in educational classes. Often, we take these skills, whether newly acquired or recently refined, to the World Clown Association or COAI conventions. Therefore, the Round Up is a



By Brian "Gunky" Waltman

great way to "test" an Idea, costume or skit before bringing to the World or COAI.

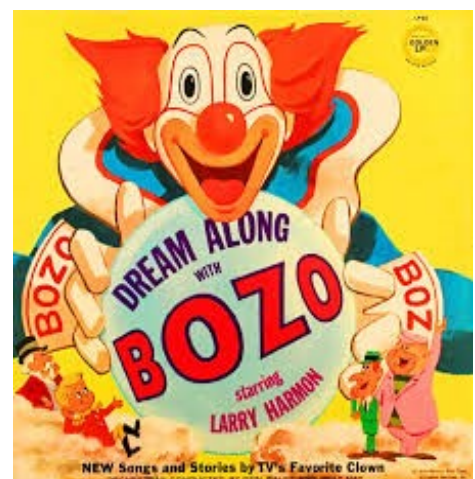
I am still trying to wrap my mind around why someone would purposefully miss a wonderful opportunity to be around so many fun clowns, educational opportunities, chances for fellowship and opportunities to improve or to test out their amazing ideas.

If we all think of just one clown who came in years gone by and try to reach out and encourage them to come back, we could double our numbers. Doubling our numbers is probably is unrealistic, BUT, simply asking another clown if they would consider coming back is easily doable! If even ten percent of those invites resulted a clown returning, we could have another entire table of clowns at the banquet to cheer and celebrate.

I truly look forward to seeing each and every one of you...and I am really looking forward to welcoming back any clown from previous years to the Midwest's celebration of clown arts.

Each of us is the key to keeping this art alive and thriving!

See ya in October!



2019 Midwest Clown Association --- 46th Annual Round-Up

“Disney Dreams”

WHEN: October 8 – October 13, 2019

WHERE: Crowne Plaza Grand Rapids- Airport
5700 East 28th Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616-957-1770

★ Shuttle service available to and from Airport

Room Price: \$89.00 (Plus applicable fees and taxes)

In order to receive the “*Disney Dreams*” Room Rate Reservations **MUST BE** received by the hotel on or before Monday, September 2, 2019

YOU MUST INFORM THE HOTEL YOU ARE WITH the MCA – DISNEY DREAMS



*When registered at the hotel with “MCA-Disney Dreams” you will receive a **FREE BREAKFAST***

Questions: Call Hazel Ovanin at 248-431-5794

NOTE: Any special needs **MUST** be made to Mark Ovanin

No later than July 8, 2019.

Mark Ovanin: 248-431-5768

October 7 2018 - February 28, 2019 - \$150.00

March 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019 - \$165.00

September 1, 2018 and at the door - \$175.00

Name: _____

Clown Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Meal Choice: _____ Meat _____ Vegetarian _____ Gluten Free

Make checks payable to: “Midwest Clown Association”

Send Check or Money Order to: **Mark Ovanin**, 4830 Fox Creek East #117, Clarkston, MI 48346

No Refunds after September 8, 2019

Returned checks will be assessed a fee of \$45.00



Look for our 2019 Mascot

“SNEEZEL”

**Special Guest:
Sean Carlock**





The Midwest Clown Association is one of the oldest organized clown associations in the country. The MCA serves the educational needs of clowns and alleys in a 7-state region, including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Each fall, one of our member alleys serves as host for a five-day convention, called the "Round-Up," where clowns from all over the Midwest (and some from outside the Midwest) gather to learn, educate, compete, share, socialize, energize, and promote the art of clowning. The 3-Ring News is now the official newsletter of the Midwest Clown Association and all rights and responsibilities belong to the organization.



Visit our Website at:
www.midwestclownassociation.org

For questions about the 3-Ring News, to submit an article, or to submit other information for publication, please contact the editor, Angie Gonzalez, at angela.gonzalez@indy.gov or 317-840-1583. See below for submission deadlines.

IMPORTANT DATES

Oct. 8-13, 2019—46th Annual MCA Round-Up (Grand Rapids, MI)

3-RING NEWS UPCOMING DEADLINES

ISSUE DATE	DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS
October 25, 2019	October 17, 2019
December 20, 2019	December 20, 2019

IF UNDELIVERABLE, PLEASE RETURN TO:

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Indianapolis, IN 46219

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