Notes on Being a Good Circus Clown
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WHAT DO WE DO?

1. Circus promotions...
2. Warm up
3. Meet and greet
4. Fund raising
5. Intermission work
6. Skit(s)
7. Finale

A) Ethics: Code of conduct. Make sure you know the rules regarding eating, drinking and smoking.

B) Costume and make-up: Be the best you can, but better than "That's good enough."

The Circus - Clown Alley is great... Little tricks are learned by working with fellow Joeys, putting on makeup together.

C) There is something for every clown to do at the circus. You never have too many clowns.

1. Circus Promotions - Ticket booth in mall - schools - others.

2. Warm up in and outside - 1 hour before show time... do not hold up the line at the entrance. This is really important if there is no reserved seating! Kids will want to see you, parents will want to get to a good seat. Leave the area when the professionals show up.

3. Meet and greet. This does not mean other fellow Shriners while kids are being ignored! Get a smile on and get on with it -- like a hospital visit. Resist the urge to upstage a fellow clown.

4. Fund raising -- never take money as a clown, have a helper with you while you perform.

i) Program sales - personally I like to do this at intermission to assist the Shriners.

ii) Face painting - before the show and during intermission. Suggest you post/display the faces you are prepared to paint. Make it known there is a fee. Don't forget the mirror. Have a Shriner (Fez) take the money. Great activity for non-performing clowns.

iii) Photo Booth - before the show, during intermission and after. Great place for a new clown and roustabouts and wannabees. Need clowns and lots of color.

Barker: "Hurry, Hurry, Hurry!" (Can sell the pictures/takes the money).

Photography: Instruct clowns to try to get the child's attention... Little ones may be better if they sit on mother's lap. Be quick! A person to place the picture in the folder and give it to the customer. Note: Don't ogle the women!!!!! Since this is a fund raiser, personal pictures are allowed only at the same time you are taking the picture. If they want to use their camera alone, the price is the same. No autographs until clowns are told, "That's a rap!" Don't have enough clowns? Consider one clown with a child and a button machine!

5. Intermission - Chance to come alive...

Don’t do balloons if the circus people are selling novelties. If you have the giveaways (sitckers) make sure you have more than enough! Self-inking stamps are great) No place for a clown with an attitude!!

6. Skits - be prepared - remember circus members judge us by our performance. They work... we play. If we do it badly, we mock them. Remember the public pays good money and demand their $$$$ worth! Have your skit timed... This is important, as the producer may have to adjust the length of his show. Simple is best -- get a response -- laughs -- boos -- but get a response. Suitable music adds a lot. Have it prepared and give it to the person responsible well in advance so it can be cued up. Personal experience suggests having a back up tape! Stay away from "Brain Gags." By the time they get it, the next act is in... unless they are ahead of you. Have fun. Know how to get in and out of the ring (Clowns and props). Are you aware that the circus roustabouts sometimes expect to be tipped for their help? Don't sit on or touch any other performers props. Be aware of the acts immediately before and after you. Be ready 2 acts before you are to go on. Have a back up skit just in case... If there are speaking parts then you will have to consider mikes, etc.

7. Finale - Some shows have a finale... if this is the case and you were performing, and I cannot say this too strongly, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO BE THERE! This is an unwritten circus rule! If there is no finale then it is great to be at the door and thank the folks for coming to the Shrine Circus.... see you next year!

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