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In my travels around the country, no matter where I visit I recognize some of the best Shrine Clowns in the world. Their ability to entertain both adults and children is magnificent. Their makeup fits their respective characters beautifully. No doubt, they represent clowning at its best! Their gimmicks and buffoonery excites both young and old. Do you all agree?

Alas! If these clowns enter into today's competition they might not stand a chance of being in the top three. Why? Is it because they are wearing what the judges consider "working" costumes? I understand judging and realize the criteria that is applied in judging a clown in makeup competition. We all agree that because he represents the Shrine he should have the best makeup possible. However, have we become so focused on how "pretty" the costume should be that we have perhaps forgotten what a clown really should look like? Webster dictionary defines clown as "a buffoon or jester who entertains and makes people laugh." Once during a seminar I asked the audience to define what a clown was. Immediately a youngster said, "Somebody that is so funny and silly or even sad that I can't help laughing... maybe like Jerry Lewis or Red Skelton... or the three stooges... even the Munsters." The question in my mind is aren't their costumes reflecting the personality they were projecting? Short pants, funny hats, colors matched or mismatched?

In order of importance is it not correct to follow the following priorities when judging:

1. Overall appearance, including costume either working or dealer manufactured.
2. Makeup.
3. Personality. In order to correctly project their persona, the respective clown characters must wear appropriate costumes and makeup. We all agree. I have seen both coveralls and jumpsuits designed to enhance the personality of the clown. I am impressed by the simplicity of the costume. However, it supports and projects the personality of the clown wearing it. Both children and adults are thoroughly entertained by these superb clowns. On the other hand, in some of the manufactured costumes that I have seen, the clowns wearing them were like frozen in place. They would not move freely and were worried they would get their expensive costumes soiled. The cost of a costume is not the measure of the effectiveness of the clown. The ability of the clown to project his personality and funny character, and make his audience laugh and be happy is without any doubt the true measure of the clowns effectiveness.

Somehow, I feel that the working clown should have a better opportunity in competition. Maybe the ISCA should take the initiative and take a look at our present competition format. I feel a good plan could be to continue to judge the four makeup costume categories as we do presently, calling this the technical ability of the clown. Continue to score as we do now naming the top ten. Then these same competitors would then have to compete in the skit and/or paradeability competition. To determine the top three clowns in each category both the technical and clownability (skit/paradeability) scores would be added together.

This method would be somewhat like gymnastics. Judging in this manner would certainly pick out the top clown in the group, giving weight to both appearance and clowning skills. Give this some thought. If you have any other ideas feel free to communicate them to myself as your competition officer this year or Walter "Skeeter" Seavey, your Education Director. We are here to serve your interests.

Nobles we have done an outstanding job the last few years on improving makeup. Now let's work on the art of making people laugh.

In my opinion our greatest and best clowns are those delightful and entertaining buffoons that we lable "working" clowns. They in fact are the number ONE clowns in every arena! Working clowns KEEP THEM LAUGHING!!

See you down the road!

Oscar Cloutier
"Clyde"