

# Egypt Shrine Clowns

Fun 'n' Frolic Weekly



Our First Issue!

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Volume 1 • Issue 1

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## The Week Ahead

### Boss Clown

Good Morning Clowns and welcome to your new Newsletter. There has been requests for more information about the unit, events and communication, so here we go.

Our last skit practice before the big show will be Wednesday night at 6:00pm, with the Council of Units meeting to follow.

There are a couple of Temple events this week, Karaoke on Friday night at 7:30, for the brave and Sally's Nashville Buddies in the SLAB in Sunday at 1:00 pm. The Unit will not be in face until the big show, Circus.

## Introducing

Welcome to the first issue of a new idea in our unit communications. The intention is to expand our capabilities for sharing not only more information, but also more types of information. We're excited about the range of possibilities and look forward

to receiving your feedback on how you think we could improve. We're also open to ideas on types of information to include in the future. The possibilities are nearly endless. Let us hear your thoughts!

## Fun 'n' Frolic Online

If you haven't visited the unit web page or social media pages lately, you really should. The Egypt Shrine Clowns web page has been updated with lots of new information and we're doing our best to keep it up-to-date. We're also active on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Our Facebook page is updated quite often with new pictures and information from and about our events.

If you have any questions about how to access or use any of these services from your computer, phone or other electronic device please do not hesitate to ask.

Here is where you can find the Egypt Shrine Clowns on the Internet. Simply click on a link below and you'll go straight there:

[www.egyptshrineclowns.com](http://www.egyptshrineclowns.com)  
[facebook.com/egyptshrineclowns](https://facebook.com/egyptshrineclowns)  
[twitter.com/egyptclowns](https://twitter.com/egyptclowns)  
[instagram.com/egyptshrineclowns](https://instagram.com/egyptshrineclowns)

## Shrine Circus 2014

The Circus is coming! Setup for the Temple will be on April 7th starting at 7:00

AM. This will not be for Clown Alley specifically but anyone who has time to assist would be appreciated. The same goes for teardown on the 14th.

Clown Alley setup will be on the 9th from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM before the Stat-ed Meeting. We will begin our teardown of Clown Alley after our last show on Sunday the 13th.

Our final skit practice will be on Wednesday the 2nd prior to the Council of Units meeting. If you're planning on attending Circus please do your best to make the practice.

Keep an eye out for more information from Boss Clown for any further details.

## Fund Raisers

Have an idea for a new fund raiser for the Fun 'n' Frolic unit? The first bafoon is seeking ideas from one and all. If you have any ideas make sure to pass them along.

## Submissions

Have information or pictures you'd like to share with the unit? If so please email myself or one of the unit officers and we'll do our best to include it in our next newsletter.

- Dash  
[dash@egyptshrineclowns.com](mailto:dash@egyptshrineclowns.com)

## Fun 'n' Frolic History

*The following article was published in 1989 for the 25th anniversary of the International Shrine Clown Association (ISCA). I found it to be a fascinating look back at our unit history and the nobles who made us what we are today. Our unit has been spreading joy and laughter for over 60 years and we will continue for many more!*

A clown unit originated through a patchwork of ideas – pieced together by incoming Potentate Norman Six, who was assisted by A.S. Leroy, Bob Hailey, Elmer Davis, Abe Johns, and Frank Hebble.

The group was authorized to function as a unit of Egypt Temple during the month of March, 1951. It was formally chartered in December of the following year, and become known as the Fun & Frolic Unit.

The 1923 Model T Ford, which is still an important part of our unit, was the only piece of equipment we had during the early days of the unit. To modify the Model T to meet our requirements, we shortened the drive shaft, moved the rear wheels forward and extended a steel platform backward from the rear end of the vehicle. When two or three clowns added their weight to the extended platform, the center of gravity shifted and the front wheels of the Ford rose off the street.

Our next step was to add individually controlled rear brakes, so that the Model T could be steered with its front wheels in the air. And, even today, "Do a wheelie" is a familiar request from the parade spectators.

In its original form, the Model T had a steering wheel which was removable, the headlights had eyes painted on the glass lenses, a rubber tube was slitted to form eyelashes, and clown names and likenesses adorned the sides of the body. On the driver's side, a long metal tube concealed a giant (five foot) canvas snake which popped out at spectators whenever the driver released the spring. Under the hood was a water tank with a tub pointed out beside the radiator cap to dampen the spirits of anyone who came too close. A bright, colored umbrella served as a top for the car, and an assortment of horns, bells, buzzers, and sirens added to the excitement. With the motor racing and horns blowing, "Leaping Lena" would go around in circles, to the delight of the spectators.

Later, as the number of clowns increased, Potentate Six loaned us his son's racing car. Any clown who had a new idea threw it into the hopper in informal and unscheduled meetings, which were held in Leroy's service station in downtown Tampa. The men's rest room there served as our make-up and costume room when preparing for local parades. Of course, we over-

flowed the cramped quarters into the grease rack area for final touches.

The highlight of our first year was a performance in Madison Square Garden on July 9, 1951 when we appeared on the same program with Olsen & Johnson in a comedy of errors. Leaping Lena and the clowns got off the train, with their equipment in New Jersey. From there they had a 20 mile drive to the Garden.

Other Shrine units paraded once around inside the Garden and went out. But our uninhibited group was encouraged to continue our brand of entertainment and it took 25 minutes for them to get worn down to the point where they couldn't go on any more.

The next piece of equipment which was added to the unit was a 1923 Dodge, which we designated to be our paddy wagon. It was spotted in the showroom of the Dodge dealer in Tampa and somehow the sympathetic dealer was inveigled to donate his attention-getter to us. Then the work on it began, to strengthen it enough for our boisterous clowns. A canon was



mounted on the top of the cab, to provide sound effects, and an act was built around it. Later it was decided that the cannon was too dangerous. So it was removed, and a big bell was mounted on the front of the vehicle.

A favorite stunt was for a group of our clowns to "arrest" observers and place them in the Paddy Wagon for a ride of a block or two. Usually, the prisoners were wives of our clowns or other Shriners unless the whim overtook a clown to arrest some comely spectator. Clown policemen figured prominently in the act and, at out-of-town parades, it was always a favorite with spectators to see some of their local officials and big-wigs arrested, carted off to our portable hoosegow and fined before they were released and returned to civilization. At times, a Kangaroo Court added to the festivities.

The 1923 Dodge is still in use within our unit.

Our next addition was the calliope. It was originally mounted on a four-wheeled trailer and it required a considerable amount of effort just to get it to follow the towing vehicle and to keep the body from rubbing the tread off its front tires. We found that out the hard way on a trip to Miami.

On our return from that trip, we received a Letter of Appreciation and individual appointments for our mem-

bers as Honorary Assistant Managers of the Mayflower Restaurant at Biscayne Boulevard in downtown Miami.

Why? Well, we sort of took a liking to the place and its customers and personnel. To show our good will toward the natives, we waited on tables in make-up and costumes as we entertained the customers – and sometimes shared their dessert. Our tips all went to the waitresses, who rested while enjoying our antics. The enjoyment became so widespread that auto traffic was tied up on Biscayne Blvd. and on the sidewalk outside the restaurant by pedestrians who couldn't crowd inside.

Several traffic policemen came to find the cause of the commotion. They lingered over apple pie and coffee, enjoyed the fun, then smiling asked us to please let the traffic flow again on the boulevard. We were tired by then anyway.

Incidentally, the calliope which we took to Miami is still a part of our unit but now it is mounted on a truck chassis.

Our next piece of equipment was a 1906 Cadillac – one cylinder with a footman's seat in the back. It was found in an old barn on a farm owned by Roy Haynes. Rats and chickens had made nests in the upholstery and on the motor. It was brought to Leroy's service station where

various members stopped in on their lunch hour, evenings, and Saturdays to work on it – of course, all work was under Leroy's supervision. One former Cadillac mechanic showed up to volunteer his time.

After months of labor, and some expenditure of money, the 1906 was in mint condition. Only the best mechanics in our unit were allowed to drive it and then they wore white gloves. It became a favorite with Potentates, both local and Imperial, to lead Shrine parades anywhere within our jurisdiction. A major department store in Tampa even displayed it in its main store window – with appropriate recognition to our unit.

Our individual members have owned many pieces of their own equipment. To name a few – high bike, baby carriage with electric motor, flying saucer with colored lights and stereo electronic music, motorcycle with sidecar, dune buggy, 3-wheeled cycle, railroad engine, motor scooters, and a "whodathunkit."

We have always been a family oriented unit and on May 20, 1954 a covered dish dinner was held at the home of Donald Ruff for the members and their families. That dinner inaugurated a series of social get-togethers that is still an important part of our unit. The social activities have contributed to a better understanding and cooperation

with the unit and new members are often attracted when they learn that their wives can take part in our activities and become better acquainted with each other.

The wives group accepted the name "Clownettes" and they meet together each month, within the Shrine complex and at the same time as our regular business meetings. They frequently volunteer to decorate tables for our dances, assist with covered dish dinners, furnish hospitality at some of our parades, and perform many other useful chores for our unit. One of the Clownettes remarked "a clownette is the driving force behind a clown." Is that much different from being a wife?

## Zephyrhills Founders Day Parade 2014



# APRIL 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 Council of Units 7:30 PM  Skit Practice 6:00 PM	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Circus Setup (Clown Alley)  4:00 PM	10 Circus  4:30 PM 7:30 PM	11 Circus  4:30 PM 7:30 PM	12 Circus  11:30 AM 3:00 PM 7:00 PM
13 Circus  1:00 PM 4:30 PM  Circus Teardown (Clown Alley)	14	15	16 Unit Meeting  7:30 PM	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

## Egypt Shrine Clowns 2014

Clown Name	Email
Bazinga	bazinga@egyptshrineclowns.com
Bogey	bogey@egyptshrineclowns.com
Chappy	chappy@egyptshrineclowns.com
Dash	dash@egyptshrineclowns.com
Denbo	denbo@egyptshrineclowns.com
Doc	doc@egyptshrineclowns.com
Doodles	doodles@egyptshrineclowns.com
Joker	joker@egyptshrineclowns.com
Kranky	kranky@egyptshrineclowns.com
Ladders	ladders@egyptshrineclowns.com
Moo Cow	moocow@egyptshrineclowns.com
Nibbles	nibbles@egyptshrineclowns.com
Nickels	nickels@egyptshrineclowns.com
Numb-Numb	numbnumb@egyptshrineclowns.com
Peanuts	peanuts@egyptshrineclowns.com
Petey	petey@egyptshrineclowns.com
Pops	pops@egyptshrineclowns.com
Punch	punch@egyptshrineclowns.com
Retro	retro@egyptshrineclowns.com
Robo	robo@egyptshrineclowns.com
Roony	roony@egyptshrineclowns.com
Shaker	shaker@egyptshrineclowns.com
Smurf	smurf@egyptshrineclowns.com
Stretcher	stretcher@egyptshrineclowns.com
Tater	tater@egyptshrineclowns.com
Thumper	thumper@egyptshrineclowns.com
U-No	uno@egyptshrineclowns.com
Waki	waki@egyptshrineclowns.com
Weelz	weelz@egyptshrineclowns.com