



International Clown Week

This website has just one reason and that is to celebrate and inform on International Clown Week, the First week in August

Check out our web pages for information on International Clown Week and Clowns

- Proclamation of National Clown Week by President Richard Nixon
- History of National Clown Week
- Charlie Award from COAI
- Bronze Clown Shoe award from Clown Hall of Fame
- What is Clown Week
- What is a Clown
- Fear of Clowns
- Clown College
- Clown Schools
- Clown Eggs
- Sample Press Release for International Clown Week
- Sample Proclamation for International Clown Week

Remember in late July to send out your International Clown Week eCards to your friends

For more information on Clowns, visit the following great websites:

- **Clown College** (Information on Clown College)
- **Clown Schools** (A directory of Clown Schools)
- **Clown Resource Directory** (A directory of Clown Resources)
- **Clown Events**(A Calendar of Educational Clown Events)
- **Clown Hall of Fame** (International Clown Hall of Fame website)
- **Clown Names** (Information on Clown Names and how to pick them)
- **COAI** (Clowns of America International group web site)
- **WCA** (World Clown Association web site)
- **Clowns Canada** (Canadian Clowns group web site)
- **Clowns International** (UK Clowns group web site)
- **Clownville News** (Clowns in the News)

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- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)



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- What is a Clown
- Fear of Clowns
- Clown College
- Clown Schools
- Clown Eggs
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- **Clowns International** (UK Clowns group web site)
- **Clownville News** (Clowns in the News)

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A free directory of resources for use by Clowns wanting to be better clowns and people who want to be clowns

- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)



Frequently asked questions on clown week

Q: When is Clown Week ? Is the same every year And why ?

A: Clown Week is always August 1-7 . It is always the same 7 days, the first week in August.

Q: Is it National Clown Week or International Clown Week ?

A: It started out as National Clown Week. When Clowns of America reorganized and became Clowns of America International in 1991, they decided to rename National Clown Week to International Clown Week. Most clowns just refer it to as Clown Week.

Q: Who is the sponsor of Clown Week?

A: While the clown group Clowns of America International is considered the sponsor of Clown Week, many clowns group from the around world celebrate Clown Week include those from World Clown Association (USA), ClownsCanada (Canada) Shrine Clown Association(USA) and Clowns International (UK)

Q: Is there really a law about Clown Week ?

A: Yes and it is US Public Law 91-443 and for more details review "[How it all began](#)" . To see the official copy of Public Law review this document [Public law 91-443](#)

Q: What do clowns and clown groups do to celebrate Clown Week ?

A: Celebrations take on a variety of forms. Such as putting on shows in malls, child care centers, hospitals and nursing homes. Or Educational events about clown and fund raisers for numerous charitable causes. Or clown appearances in parades, grand openings, greeting people, visting kids at the hospital, and appearances at other places.

Q: How many clowns celebrate Clown Week ?

A: The answer is a lot. Clown Groups have a membership of more than 10,000 clowns and all of clowns do not belong to a clown group. So our guess is that there are more than 20,000 clowns world wide. We think they all celebrate Clown Week

- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

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How Clown week started

- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

National Clown Week
By the President of the USA
A Proclamation

Whoever has heard the laughter of a child or seen sudden delight on the face of a lonely old man has understood in those brief moments mysteries deeper than love.

All men are indebted to those who bring such moments of quiet splendor-who redeem sickness and pain with joy. All across America good men in putty noses and baggy trousers following a tradition as old as man's need to touch gently the lives of his fellowman, go into orphanages and children's hospitals, homes for the elderly and for the retarded, and give a part of themselves. Today, as always, clowns and the spirit they represent are as vital to the maintenance of our humanity as the builders and the growers and the governors.

In the folklore of the world is the persistent claim that the heart of a clown is sad, and that all the gladness he provokes is simply a facade for the pain he cannot reveal to the world. In the myth is the kernel of reason: the clown leaves happiness where he goes, and takes misery away with him.

Yet we cannot suppose there is real truth in the myth. For surely the laugh-makers are blessed: they heal the heart of the world.

To call public attention to the charitable activities of clowns and the wholesome entertainment they provide for all our citizens, the Congress by a joint resolution approved October 8, 1970 (Public Law 91-433), has requested the President to designate the week of August 1 through August 7, 1971, as International Clown Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICHARD NIXON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of August 1 through August 7, 1971, as International Clown Week. I invite the Governors of the States and the appropriate officials of other areas under the United States flag to issue similar proclamations.

I urge the people of the United States recognize the contributions made by clowns in their entertainment at children's hospitals, charitable institutions, for the mentally retarded, and generally helping to lift the spirits and boost the morale of our people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred ninety-sixth.

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[Home](#)
[Mobile Version](#)
[Details](#)
[F.A.Q.](#)
[How it started](#)
[Proclamation](#)
[History](#)
[Charlie Award](#)
[Clown Hall of Fame](#)
[Lifetime of Laughter](#)
[What is Clown Week](#)
[What is a Clown](#)
[Fear of Clowns](#)
[Coulrophobia](#)
[Clown College](#)
[Clown Eggs](#)
[Samples](#)
[Press Release](#)
[Proclamation](#)
[Press](#)
[Media Guide](#)
[Resources](#)
[Art of Clowning](#)
[Clown Resources](#)
[Clownville News](#)
[Clown Events](#)
[Clown Schools](#)
[Mobile Clown](#)
[Clown Groups](#)
[COAI](#)
[Clowns Canada](#)
[Clowns International](#)
[WCA](#)
[And more groups](#)



RICHARD NIXON

XXXVII President of the United States: 1969-1974

Proclamation 4071 - National Clown Week
August 2, 1971

By the President of the United States Of America **A Proclamation**

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RICHARD NIXON

Citation: John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA.

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- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

International Clown Week

There are several versions of "who had the idea" of National Clown week and "who convinced Congress" to pass the Proclamation. We think several people had the idea and several people worked on convincing Congress. We are glad that everybody succeeded in their goal. Many thanks to all of them for their efforts. Here are the most common versions of what happened.

Watt "WABO" Saveage

Considered by many as the person that first came up with the idea of Clown Week way back around 1950. It is said that this week was selected because it was the week that both of his daughters had birthdays.

Frank "Kelly the Clown" Kelly

Clown Week's humble beginnings were in the 1950's. Not much happened 'till 1966 when the first International Clown Week chairman, Frank "Kelly the Clown" Kelly, was appointed by Ray Bickford, president of Clown Club of America.

In 1967 Clown Club of America members were urged to write to their congressmen and senators requesting a presidential proclamation naming August 1-7 as National Clown Week.

Finally in 1969 a resolution was introduced. After clowns met with Senator John McClellan of Arkansas who was chairman of the Senate subcommittee on Observances and Holidays success was finally achieved.

On October 8, 1970, Public Law 91-443 under the 91st Congress, JJR 26 was passed by both the House and Senate and was sent to President Richard Nixon for his signature.

BILL "BOOM-BOOM" BAILY

Bill was an original member of Clowns of America when it was founded in 1967 and held membership number 81. He was named the U.S. Chairman of National Clown Week.

Because each year a chairman had to be chosen in each state to ask their governor to issue a proclamation honoring National Clown Week, Bill pushed for National Clown Week publicity.

He convinced Congressman Garmatz of Maryland and Congressman Myers of Indiana to introduce a joint resolution in Congress establishing National Clown Week as an annual event. He lobbied congress and organized a visit by clowns to the senate building in Washington, D.C.

The joint resolution was signed into law by President Nixon on August 2, 1971.

Bill remained International Clown Week Chairman for Clowns of America and Clown of America International until his death.

Bill was honored by induction into the International Clown Hall of Fame in 1996.

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Charlie Award

The Charlie Award is a trophy that is given to the COAI Clown Alley which best documents and celebrates International Clown Week (August 1-7).

Adopted in 1974, it was offered to the (then) COAI Alley that did the best job observing National Clown Week.

In 1999, the COAI Board approved a new award was created for the individual member.

The Individual Award is given to a member of COAI which best documents and celebrates Clown Week on an individual basis.

For more information on the Charlie award, visit the COAI website at

[Charlie Award Webpage](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

Click on a flag to translate this web page



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[Home](#)
[Mobile Version](#)
[Details](#)
[F.A.Q.](#)
[How it started](#)
[Proclamation](#)
[History](#)
[Charlie Award](#)
[Clown Hall of Fame](#)
[Lifetime of Laughter](#)
[What is Clown Week](#)
[What is a Clown](#)
[Fear of Clowns](#)
[Coulrophobia](#)
[Clown College](#)
[Clown Eggs](#)
[Samples](#)
[Press Release](#)
[Proclamation](#)
[Press](#)
[Media Guide](#)
[Resources](#)
[Art of Clowning](#)
[Clown Resources](#)
[Clownville News](#)
[Clown Events](#)
[Clown Schools](#)
[Mobile Clown](#)
[Clown Groups](#)
[COAI](#)
[Clowns Canada](#)
[Clowns International](#)
[WCA](#)
[And more groups](#)

Clown Hall of Fame members

1989 Lou Jacobs, Mark Anthony, Felix Adler, Emmett Kelly Sr., Red Skelton, Otto Griebling
1990 Leon Buttons McBryde, Bob Clarabell Keeshan, Joseph Grimaldi
1991 Bobby Kaye, Frankie Saluto, Michael Polakov, Glen Little, Dan Rice
1992 Prince Paul Alpert, Adrien Grock Wettach, Paul Jung, Gene Cousin Otto Lee, Arthur Vercoe Pedlar
1993 Roy Cookie Brown, Steve T.J. Tatters Smith, Albert Fratellini, Al Ross, Oleg Popov
1994 Annie Fratellini, Bumpsey Anthony Hulme, Jim Howle, Joe Jackson Sr., Nicolai CoCo Polisakoff
1995 Edwin Poodles Hanneford, Dimitri, Jimmy Happy Williams, Don Homer Bruda, Chester Sherman, Joe Vanni
1996 Bob Bozo Bell, Jackie LeClaire, Bert Williams, Bill Boom-Boom Bailey
1997 George Footit, Raphael Chololat Padilla
1998 Robert Armin, Ernie Blinko Burch, Peggy Williams
1999 Bill Irwin, Richard Snowflake Snowberg, Charlie Rivel, Bob Hambone Hamilton, Umberto Antonet Guillame
2000 George Fox, Francios & Paul Fratellini, Duane Uncle Soapy Thorpe, Nola Rae, Francesco Caroli
2001 Billy Baker, Bill Balantine, Charlie Chaplin, Irvin Romig
2002 Alvin Eisenberg, Barry Grandma Lubin, Charlie Caroli, Harold Happy Kellems
2004 Earl Mr. Clown Chaney, Pinto Colvig, W.D. Curley Robbins, Giovanni Nino Zoppe

Lifetime of Laughter Awards

1990 Larry Harmon
1990 Willard Scott
1991 Max Patkin
1991 Aye Jaye
1992 Allen Hall
1993 Kohl & Company
1994 Ben Barkin
1995 Dr. Joel Goodman
1997 Charles Chappie Fox
1998 Alan Livingston
1999 Keith Glitsy Crary

2000 Meadowlark Lemon

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- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

A "Lifetime of Laughter Awards"

- 1990 Larry Harmon
- 1990 Willard Scott
- 1991 Max Patkin
- 1991 Aye Jaye
- 1992 Allen Hall
- 1993 Kohl & Company
- 1994 Ben Barkin
- 1995 Dr. Joel Goodman
- 1997 Charles "Chappie" Fox
- 1998 Alan Livingston
- 1999 Keith "Glitsy" Crary
- 2000 Meadowlark Lemon

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The joint resolution was signed into law by President Nixon on August 2, 1971.

President Nixon released his "National Clown Week By the President of the United States of America A Proclamation".

Since then Governors and Mayors have had their own Clown week proclamation for their state or city.

Today the National Clown Week has grown to International Clown Week.

And is celebrated all over the world

- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

Click on a flag to translate this web page



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A free directory of resources for use by Clowns wanting to be
better clowns and people who want to be clowns



- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

What is a Clown ?

It's International Clown Week, and that has us thinking about this ancient figure, who is the primal source of laughter. Our word for "clown" comes from the old Icelandic, klunni, which meant a clumsy person, and is related to other archaic words for clod, or clump, or, in old Middle High German, klutz. We still use that word today to describe someone who always seems to be tripping over his two left feet.

No one really knows who the first clown was, though Mel Brooks has an answer for that question in his hysterically funny movie, "History of the World Part One," in which the earliest belly laugh is caused when a cavorting, stand-up caveman comedian gets eaten by a dinosaur in the middle of his monologue -- to his tribe's great amusement.

A more likely choice for original clown honors may go to the ice-age drawing of a dancing man wearing a deer's head, which was discovered in a cave in the south of France by three spelunking boys in the early 1900s. This mysterious figure, who is frequently called the magician or shaman, whose spells could relieve you of illness, is just a few steps away from the "show-man," whose incantations can relieve you of the pressures of everyday life.

The Zunis of the American South West had a name for this creature: he was called the Contrary. He appeared, dressed in a striped costume, wearing a cone-shaped hat, at all the most sacred festivals. His job was to make fun of serious things, to call attention to the absurd, impossible side of our experience and thus to complete a kind of cosmic circle. He reminds us of that other shadowy, tricky, wobbly side to our nature. He was supposed to do what you aren't supposed to do -- fall down, eat the wrong things, say the wrong things, behave the wrong way -- everything we were expected to out-grow when we joined the serious adult world.

As kids we somehow felt a kind of kinship with this character -- after all, to some degree we'd been there ourselves, not too long before. And perhaps that is why so many clowns are child-like, from Baby Hermes to Chaplin, to Robin Williams to Adam Sandler.

When you think about it, the job hasn't changed much in, oh, twenty or thirty thousand years.

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Coulrophobia

- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

The term **coulrophobia**, the fear of clowns, is a recent coining in response to a surprisingly large amount of interest in the condition, particularly on the Internet, where websites have been developed which are specifically devoted to the issue.

The word has no significant coverage in printed dictionaries, but try an Internet search on **coulrophobia** and you'll discover a host of websites by **coulrophobia** (people who fear clowns), the condition being one of the most remarked-upon phobias on the Internet.

Much of the interest has originated with a man called Rodney Blackwell a web designer who said he was seriously afflicted with the phobia. So he decided to set up several website featuring message boards where fellow **coulrophobes** could share experiences and he could make some money selling merchandise bearing an "I hate Clowns" logo.

Causes of the phobia In discussions of causes of **coulrophobia** seem to agree that the most fear-inducing aspect of clowns is the heavy makeup which, accompanied by the bulbous nose and weird color of hair, that completely conceal the wearer's identity.

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- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

Clown College

It use to be that every person who dreamed of becoming a clown also dreamed of attending the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Clown College. For 30 years Clown College taught the basics -- how to apply your clown makeup, how to take a pie thrown at your big clown nose, and to fall down without hurting yourself.

Clown College was the brainchild of Irvin Feld. In 1968, the clown profession seemed to be dwindling and -- Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus had only a dozen clowns, most of them getting older by the day. Irvin Feld wanted to make sure there were clowns well into the future.

So the college directors held auditions at colleges and theatres around the country. Hundreds of would-be clowns showed their stuff .

The competition was intense. Only 30 new clowns were accepted into each year's class.

There, they donned large shoes and baggy pants to learn about makeup, juggling and the fine art of falling down. They took classes in stilt-walking, gymnastics, juggling, and mime.

The classes were free and the best of the graduates took their large clown shoes on the road with the *Greatest Show on Earth*.

But the Clown College became a victim of its own success. In 1998, there were about over a thousand trained clowns and there was little danger of the profession dying out. So Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus decided to stop offering eight-week introductory classes in funny stuff in Sarasota, Florida.

But what's an aspiring clown going to do today ?

Once choice is today's version of Clown College. It lives on in the educational initiatives of three nationally-touring units of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Here, the next generation of circus clowns learns the skills and traditions: character development, improvisation, makeup, gag development, prop and costume construction, acrobatics, dance and the physical skills of slaps and falls, stilt-walking, unicycling, juggling and much more.

And another choice is that some of the graduates of previous Clown College classes have taken on the task of teaching the new generation of clowns on Clowns School , all over the world.

So check out the hyperlink of Clown Schools. There we have listed the active Clown Schools that teach the newest generation of clowns.

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Clown Eggs

The tradition began in the U.K. around 1946 at what was then the International Circus Clowns Club but is now called Clowns International.

A member named Stan Bult started recording clown images on chicken eggs with the insides blown out. It started as a hobby, and, like many hobbies, it just grew. Mr. Bult kept his collection at home, occasionally loaning it out for show, such as at the 1951 Centenary Exhibition of the Crystal Palace.

The collection continued to be lent out after Mr. Bult's death but sadly most of the eggs were destroyed in an accident at one such exhibit around 1965.

Clown Bluey became chairman of Clowns International in 1984 and resurrected Mr. Bult's practice of recording clown members' faces on eggs. This time a professional artist was used and the faces were painted on china-pot eggs instead of chicken eggs. Over the years, many of the lost older eggs have been reproduced, and new eggs are added frequently.

According to Clowns International, "The eggs are not just a record of the clown's facial makeup, but an actual portraiture in miniature." In addition to paint, the artist uses samples of the clown's costume material and wig-hair to produce an eggs-act match. A photo of the egg collection may be seen at the Clowns International website.

About twenty-five years ago, Leon "Buttons" McBryde heard about the British practice of registering clown makeup using eggs. He and his wife Linda eventually met the caretaker of the British clown egg registry, and around 1979 started a similar registry for clowns in the U.S. This collection now includes over 700 eggs, covering clowns of all types from around the world. Linda McBryde is the artist and co-creator of the registry.

In the U.S. collection, the faces are hand-painted on goose eggs (more durable than chicken eggs), and decorated with various materials (such as clay, wire, felt, tiny flowers, glitter, etc.) to obtain as accurate a representation of the clown face and costume as possible.

Though not an official registry, the collection is meant to preserve the uniqueness of each clown's face makeup. Quoting from the Department of Clown Registry information sheet: "It is an unwritten law among clowns that one must never copy the face of another." Linda McBryde told us, "Although this is not a legal institution, the collection is a record of the person's name, the makeup design, and the date it was submitted. In one case that I know of, a person used the registry in a court case in which someone was infringing on his makeup design."

The U.S. egg collection is currently in storage, Pictures of the collection, however, can be seen at the International Clown Hall of Fame. or on the Flickr website in a slide show at this url [The Clown Egg Register](#)

Click on a flag to translate this web page

- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)



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Sample Press Release

Here's a sample press release you can adapt and use. Depending on your computer, you might be able to paste this into a word-processing document and adapt it even further. Thanks again for participating!

- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

Press Release
For Immediate Release
International Clown Week August 1 - 7, 2011 Press Release

From August 1 thru August 7, 2011, hundreds of clowns will be clowning around all of the USA, as part of International Clown Week - August 1 - 7, 2011.

Everyone recognizes the importance of laughter and happiness, particularly in the crazy world in which we live today. The importance of laughter and joy and the role that clowns play in bringing us happiness has been recognized by parents, physicians and politicians. President Nixon felt the role of clowns was so important that in 1971, that we signed a proclamation naming August 1-7 as Clown Week.

In _____(fill in your community here)_____, _____(your name here)_____ will be sharing their skills at the _____(location)_____. (You may want to provide a short quote here.)

"A Smile is a terrible thing to waste!" said organizer - Debbie aka DaMissus the Clown of Springfield, Virginia . It's a way of changing the world - a little bit of fun at a time."

Hundreds of clowns participated during 2008's International Clown Week - in schools, libraries, and hospitals. They clowned around in malls, on the street, and even in grocery stores...all for fun, all for free.

Clowning around was observed in many countries around the world .

Again this year, the folks from Clown Resource Directory have joined the fun officially by hosting the International Clown Week website!

For the uninitiated, Clown Resource Directory is where the Internet meets the Clowning

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- [Home](#)
- [Mobile Version](#)
- [Details](#)
- [F.A.Q.](#)
- [How it started](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [History](#)
- [Charlie Award](#)
- [Clown Hall of Fame](#)
- [Lifetime of Laughter](#)
- [What is Clown Week](#)
- [What is a Clown](#)
- [Fear of Clowns](#)
- [Coulrophobia](#)
- [Clown College](#)
- [Clown Eggs](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Proclamation](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Media Guide](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Art of Clowning](#)
- [Clown Resources](#)
- [Clownville News](#)
- [Clown Events](#)
- [Clown Schools](#)
- [Mobile Clown](#)
- [Clown Groups](#)
- [COAI](#)
- [Clowns Canada](#)
- [Clowns International](#)
- [WCA](#)
- [And more groups](#)

Sample Proclamation

The following is "suggested" wording to help get many more proclamations. It just makes sense; if someone does the work for the official, the chances are much higher that a proclamation will be issued. The officials are very busy and proclamation are not one of their highest concerns.

Start the process as soon as possible to give them as much times as possible

International Clown Week August 1 - 7, 20XX Proclamation

To: Name of Official
From: _____ would like to request a proclamation for International Clown Week

Please send the proclamation to:

Possible wording on the proclamation might be:

Whereas clowns have long been known as ambassadors of joy and good will and bring happiness to both joy and good will and bring happiness both to children and adults and:

Where as: In recognition to the charitable activities of clowns and the wholesome entertainment they provide for all of our citizens: "International Clown Week" has been proclaimed for the week of August 1 thru August 7, 20XX, and Now there for I, _____ proclaim the week of August 1 thru 7 " International Clown Week"

For additional information on International Clown Week, check out the website at www.internationalclownweek.org

Thanks in Advance
Your Name and Your Clown Name and your Your Clown Group

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