



Cheerful Clown Alley #166

Houston, Texas

## Our Information

### General Information:

- The alley was 'born' in 1982 and named Cheerful Clown Alley.
- Six months later, in 1983, the alley was chartered, under Clowns of America International (COAI), as alley #166.
- The alley is also affiliated with the Texas Clown Association (TCA).
- We are a Section 501(C) (3) non-profit organization, as termed by the Internal Revenue Service.
- The alley is funded totally by annual membership dues, donations, clown school, and alley fund raisers.
- Our purpose is:
  1. To study the art, history, and philosophy of clowning.
  2. Educate its members and the general public in the wholesome and clean entertainment that is provided by the profession of clowning.
  3. To promote and support other non-profit charitable organizations in our community.

### Meetings:

- Meetings are held monthly, on the second Thursday, at 7:00 PM.
- Meetings consist of a business meeting and an educational and entertaining program.
- Programs generally touch upon one or more aspects of the art of clowning or a related field.
- Meetings usually last approximately two hours.
- Guests are always welcome at monthly Alley meetings. There is no charge for alley members or guests/visitors to attend a monthly alley meeting.
- Currently the meeting location is:  
The Center Serving Persons With Mental Retardation (in the Susan Clayton Vaughn Auditorium) at  
3550 W. Dallas (@ the intersection of W. Dallas and Marston), near the intersection of Shepherd Dr. & West Dallas.



Cheerful Clown Alley #166

Houston, Texas

### **Gigs:**

Gigs are published in the monthly newsletter, "The Cheerful Chatter", and in the form of a handout available at each alley meeting. Occasionally a gig will be posted via email, especially if the gig has not been published in the Chatter or on a handout and the gig will take place prior to the next alley meeting.

- Gigs approved by the board will be listed on the Gig Sheet for alley member participation.
- Approved gigs must benefit a charitable cause and/or a non-profit organization for a worthy cause. No paid entertainment is allowed at an alley-sponsored gig. No one representing Cheerful Clown Alley is allowed to profit financially from an alley-sponsored gig.
- There are regular on-going gigs that have a set day and time each month. These typically are for various children's hospitals and low-income nursing homes that have little or no entertainment budget for their patients or residents.
- Some of the gigs will require a criminal background check and / or security clearance or prior approval before an alley member may work the gig, as in the case of most of the on-going hospital gigs.

### **Social Functions:**

- Clown Night Out: These are social functions that are offered to alley members as an opportunity for the members and their families to get better acquainted outside of gigs and monthly meetings. It is a purely social, plain-clothes event, held usually at a restaurant, park, theater, or similar location. We generally hold a Clown Night Out once every two to three months, depending upon the decision of the committee's chairperson.
- The Shrine Circus and the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus: Each year we attend one performance each of the Shrine Circus and the RBB&B Circus as a group. Circus nights are designed as another form of social gatherings for members to become better acquainted with each other. Oftentimes, attendees will gather at a nearby restaurant following the event for a meal or coffee and dessert to continue the fun and festivities.
- Annual Spring Fling Picnic: Each year we hold a picnic in the spring to get together, eat, play and relax. It is a great time to become better acquainted with your fellow alley members. In some years we have been known to hold two picnics, one in the spring and one in the fall. The fall event is usually called the Fall Fanfest or Fall Festival. There is no hard and fast rule as to the number of



Cheerful Clown Alley #166

Houston, Texas

social gatherings we hold each year. We try to gather as often as we can to increase the growth and development of friendships within the alley.

- December Holiday Party: Each December we hold a very nice Holiday Party, usually at a local hotel banquet room or similar facility. We have a nice meal or buffet and some great entertainment is provided for us, for a change! We are able to kick back at the end of the year and enjoy the show, instead of being the show!
- Additional Events: There are other alley sponsored social events that will take place from time to time, as dictated by the members and the board. The Cheerful Chatter (alley newsletter) keeps the members up to date on the functions coming up.

## Education:

- Monthly Meeting Programs: Each month, an educational and entertaining program is offered at the alley meeting. Sometimes the program is a hands-on workshop format, sometimes a lecture format, and sometimes a show format. Our Vice President strives diligently to provide quality programming that will hold the attention and interest of the members, as well as improving their education as clowns.
- Workshops: Every summer, we offer one educational workshop, usually held all day on a Saturday that is completely FREE of charge to all Cheerful Clown Alley members. We usually select a COAI artist in residence or someone of similar caliber to teach this workshop. Topics range from beginning character development the becoming a seasoned veteran clown. We ask the guest lecturer to provided topics that will interest both the novice and the seasoned professional clowns and everyone in between. This workshop is a great way to further your education as a clown! We may also sponsor one or more paid workshops later in the year at a nominal fee, for the furtherance of your clowning education.
- Clown School: Each summer, Cheerful Clown Alley sponsors and teaches one of the most highly acclaimed clown schools in the nation! It is an eight-week program, with one makeup lab/workshop and one educational artistry lab/workshop (both held on Saturdays). Evening classes are held weekly (one night each week). Graduation is held on the Saturday following the last weekly session. Students will perform single and group skits in full clown makeup and wardrobe as part of their graduation exercises. Diplomas are awarded at the



Cheerful Clown Alley #166

Houston, Texas

close of the graduation ceremony. Tuition covers material costs for the classes being taught and alley membership dues for the current year. Cheerful Clown Alley members teach the classes. These members volunteer their time and talents to make the clown school possible! Occasionally an outside guest lecturer is brought in, but most classes are taught by alley members.

- Conventions are an additional avenue for our members to sharpen their clowning skills. Each year there are a number of wonderful conventions available to our members.
  1. "Joey to The World" is an all-gospel clown convention, held each January in southeast Houston, Texas at the Sagemont Church. It is a Friday evening and all-day-Saturday convention with several headliners sharing their skills in the art of gospel clowning. There is also a balloon jam concurring simultaneously in another part of the building for those who love balloons and want to further their skills as a balloonist. A dealer/vendor room will be available for your shopping pleasure. It is not a requirement that the attendee be a member of any clowning organizations to attend this convention. Registration cost is very affordable for this wonderful convention.
  2. COAI Convention is held annually in a different US city each year. The host alley for the convention will determine the convention's location. This convention will be in the spring of the year, usually in April. There will be a combination of performances, workshops, and a variety of competitions for the attendee to choose from, along with several social functions, including an awards banquet. There will be a dealer/vendor room available for your shopping pleasure. COAI membership is required to attend.
  3. TCA Convention is held annually in the mid to late summer. It is held in a different city in Texas each year. There will be workshops, performances, and several categories of competitions for the attendee to choose from, as well as several social functions, including an awards banquet. There will be a dealer/vendor room available for your shopping pleasure. TCA membership is required to attend.

Document written by Mary "Starlight" Morris ~ 2009