



#CanadianClownInOrlando

A daily journal when attending the 2016 World Clown Convention
by Empress Cherry Sunday (Stacey Laureyssens)

#CanadianClownInOrlando - Day 1

This morning I entered the lobby and was greeted with smiling faces of friends who were really excited that we would get to spend the week together - and I've already made new friendships with a few people that I've really connected with.

At the opening ceremonies I got a sweet little shout-out from the president of the World Clown Association, as I am the interim president of Clowns Canada, so I blew a few bubbles to the crowd.

I got to take a workshop with a dear friend from Thailand, Kritsana Khamkong aka Deaw Zipper from Thai Circus, and face painting with some truly masterful face painters from Silly Farm. I also met a legend in clowning – Leon McBride! We figured out what we will have to do for the competitions this week and I'm really excited to get to play with everyone.

#CanadianClownInOrlando - Day 2

It was an early morning getting ready. Putting my makeup on at our hotel and then driving to the convention. I watched some balloons demonstrations first thing and then right into the balloon competition! I really appreciate how my community has taken me under their wings, mentored me and nurtured my growth. I made balloons inspired by my mentors. I was grateful for having them in my life.

We had our costume competition today and it was amazing to see the variety of clowns from

all over the world in different categories. So much love went into these costumes. Beautiful work!

I spent most of my day with Lin - getting ready and talking about future plans of hopefully working together. I love meeting new people and feeling like they are kindred to me and that we've been friends forever.

Tonight we had our circus themed event and it was so delightful seeing all of these circus archetype costumes presented with the flare of a clown!

The Flying Wallendas did a demonstration and talked on their amazing history – eight generations of circus performers – specializing in high wire. So inspirational! It was an honour to get to meet them. I look forward to reading their book and watching their documentary, which I purchased today! www.wallenda.com

#CanadianClownInOrlando - Day 3

My morning started out the way any performer would dream it to! I was selected to by World Clown to be shadowed by a reporter (from the Orlando Sentinel) to do a story on the convention and why events like these are so important! We chatted as I put my makeup on, she got a make over and she joined me for a workshop hosted by the conventions featured performer! So awesome! You can check out the Fox News coverage right here. <http://goo.gl/dfkckj>

We had our performance competitions today and I performed my brand new act - "Forever Blowing Bubbles" where I sing the classic song from 1919! Cannot wait to share it with my friends and fans! I also got to be the audience participant for my new friend Lin! So many talented performers! Such an honour to share the stage with my peers from all over the world!

It was very rewarding to have an opportunity to give back to the organization by volunteering for TEAM ZED! What a dedicated group of people who are doing everything in their power to ensure the competitions run smoothly. Can't do anything without a good team! Thank you for having me.

What was really amazing is that we got all of the large clown organizations' presidents together today and took a photo! TRULY AMAZING!

#CanadianClownInOrlando - Day 4

It was an early start for today's face painting competition! I had pushed for some extra models to show up incase anyone needed a face to paint and the Beery family delivered 4 beautiful faces to work with! It was fun working on 2 of their Jr. Joeys for my competition! The youngest, Gavin, picked out the brand new 'Ruby Sky' Arty Cake I had gotten from Dotsy the Clown before my trip. Lucky for him I had already planned on competing with my Fox design which uses that exact one-stroke! One of the board members stopped in with a mother and her 2 daughters that were vacationing at our hotel just before I started packing up and I was delighted to do face painting on the girls who were delightful! Turns out they are also Canadian and live just in Markham, Ontario. I hope to see them again soon!

Later that morning, I got to sign an issue of the Orlando Sentinel - as I was featured on the Front Page. Working with their reporting team was a great experience and I will treasure our time together with the wonderful keepsake of their paper, which we purchased 12 copies of to bring home! <http://goo.gl/dfkckj>

We had a great group photo done (I'm in the back holding a white polka dot umbrella that someone brought for me so I wouldn't burn in the sun- so sweet) and then we got a bunch of Canadians together and we took some photos and sang "Oh Canada" for a video!

At the Paradability competition, I wore my bubble costume and paraded with 2 bubble guns and my kazoo. A "gift from the gods" occurred when someone suggested that the woman beside her needed a bath and I gave her the greatest bubble bath ever! She was open to playing with me and scrubbed herself with the bubbles - it was a beautiful moment of improvised play!

I got to take part in the Caring Clown discussion panel and am excited to go attend Clown Camp with some of these performers later this spring!

In the evening we saw the amazing performer, Iman Lizarazu! A great show with lots of talented opening acts. I loved watching with the show with Sage - a little 11 year old Jr. Joey. Iman's unique mix of theatrical clowning and amazing skills sets, like Juggling and Rola Bola, I'm sure made a huge impression on such a spriteful youth as Sage and all the passionate performers watching the show. INSPIRING!

#CanadianClownInOrlando - Day 5

Well it was the last day of the convention and, without having any competitions planned, I got to take in some lectures from amazing seasoned performers from England, India and America. You can always feel how much love the instructors at the World Clown Conventions have for their art/businesses as well as their passion for community building which drives them to mentor their peers - it's wonderful!

I really feel like I am a part of something wonderful and I love to give back - Team Zed was a great way to support the people making this happen. The luncheon today was lovely and I will cherish the certificate that was presented to me. I want to do more to give back to this community that has made me feel so welcomed - and I will!

Tonight's awards gala was amazing. The awards were given out to each category and it was so amazing that the photographers had taken the time to create a power point / slide show of each winner so that we could know which clown won because most days we were all in clown and barely saw each other in our muggle forms.

I was honoured with a silver metal for Face Painting - and I am so blessed to have mentors at home who guide me and share their knowledge. I hope that they can come to a WCA convention one day and compete themselves as I know their quality of work is extremely beautiful! I couldn't be here without you! Thank you!

Coming to conventions and sharing our love of performance and dedication to excellent skills brings us closer. Friendly competition inspires us and gives us tools to be better performers. Diversity from a global community opens our eyes to new approaches and techniques outside of our own local communities.

The best thing about clown is that verbal language is not always needed. We can transcend beyond it with positivity, acceptance, play and, most importantly, love.

I love my World Clown community - I wish you all the happiness and success for this next year and I hope to see you all in Thailand 2017!

#CanadianClownInOrlando - Goodbyes

I got to say goodbye to some of my new friends before I left the day after the last day before we started driving back to Canada. I was so moved by the love I felt with the 11-year old, Sage, as we said our goodbyes. She held on to me as I chatted with her family with tears of love streaming down her face.

It reminded me of one of the first exercises we did in theatrical clowning where you imagine that someone you love has an amazing opportunity but has to leave for another country and you may never see them again. Although you are happy for them you wish that they could stay. You see them off and you wave good buy as they leave - and that feeling of joy mixed with sadness is the clown neutral.

I have met a few new friends that I feel like have known forever. I love finding kindred spirits! I hope we can communication online - I look forward to following their journey.

I got a lovely message from K in Japan, who was too ill to make the trip, where he thanked me for helping his team of Japanese clowns that were at the convention. So sweet.

None of this journey would have been possible for the love and support from my parents, my financiers and chauffeurs. I am so glad they could experience this with me, meet my tribe, take in all the clown logic and love. You make me great and I love you with all my heart. Thank you.

