

MEET THE CLOWNS INTERVIEWS WITH RCC MEMBER CLOWNS



A note about this new feature: as new alley members, we have been very curious to know more about our fellow clowns—how you got started, what you do. So this seems like a great chance for us to indulge our curiosity about you! I debated how to choose whom we would spotlight—alphabetical, length of time as RCC member, etc. Then I thought, “I’ll just choose at random.” But I was thinking in Spanish as I thought that. “At random” in Spanish is “al azar.” And that brought me straight to Eartha (aka Marlene Azar)!

Mensa

Opossums aren’t a regular feature in most clown acts, but Eartha brings home her point with this unusual pet: we often dislike or fear that which we don’t understand. As she helps her audience understand a creature most of us only see scurrying across the road at night, they gain an appreciation for another piece of planet Earth.

Eartha’s act often begins with the “magical” appearance of another pet, as amazed viewers see a handful of feathers emerge as a live lovebird from her change bag. Major, a Moroccan cockatoo, is another feathered assistant who has helped her draw a crowd during her entire 11-year clowning career. His breed may live one hundred years or more, so at age 15, his clown career has just begun!

Although Marlene had done

some clowning at her church, it wasn’t until she found her clown character, Eartha, and her distinctive environmental message that her clown career took off. She thought if McDonald’s could sell more burgers with a clown’s help, she could sell taking care of Earth better as a clown.

Currently she performs about 150 times each year. She does shows at fairs, festivals and birthday parties, and her favorite venue, company picnics. “I’m not preaching to the choir” she says of those gigs. She finds them a great place to make people think about their relationship to the Earth.

Eartha says that people often ask her how she learned her clowning skills, and wonder whether she has been to Clown Camp. However, much of what she does she has learned

through her involvement with Rose City Clowns. She has been a member of our Alley as long as she has been clowning.

Her participation in the Society of American Magicians (SAM) has also been a great help. “Learning magic knocked my clowning into a higher level,” she says. She has found magic to be a terrific learning tool, as well as increasing the entertainment value of her show. She recommends the SAM to her fellow RC Clowns, finding members are always eager to help fellow magicians learn new tricks or perfect old ones.

Marlene has two children. Her son is a minister and her daughter just completed a degree in environmental studies. And so her concern for the planet has been passed on to her family, as well as to her audiences!