

“Bo-Dino, the Dean of Clowns”

By Richard Snowberg

The namesake for our World Clown Association educational scholarship is Dean Weiss, more commonly known as “Bo-Dino, the Dean of Clowns.” Our organization has never featured him on a cover illustration, so we’ve finally overcome that omission.

Dean portrayed a happy-go-lucky, philosophical clown who believed in “following the rainbow”. As such, he wrote a book by this very title. He was a bank vice-president, who was given an ultimatum to cut out the weekend clown work he loved, or resign his bank position. He talked it over with his wife Mary, and left banking to follow his rainbow.

I had the honor of seeing him perform as the featured guest at an early 1980’s Midwest Clown Roundup. His presentation was like none I had ever seen. He came on stage in a business suit, and while he talked about the history and meaning of clowning he began to apply his clown face. In less than ten minutes



time, he was finished and stripped away his business suit, to disclose his clown wardrobe, which had been hidden inside. He was a clown that performed and spoke from the heart. He really reached his audiences and spoke frequently of the

wonderful lives and beings around us. Shortly thereafter, he agreed to be on our staff at Clown Camp® for the summer of 1986. However, events toward the end of 1985 kept him from us.

Dean’s untimely death, November 15, 1985, occurred in an automobile accident while traveling between clown engagements. However, this 48 year old performer’s legacy has lived on through the efforts of his family, and the honorees who each year receive a scholarship in his name. Now I’d like to tell you a bit about his family and how his memory is maintained in their hearts.

In 1995 his family wrote the following memorial commentary, which appeared in a local paper.

“Ten years have gone by since you went beyond the rainbow. We have missed you greatly.

“You have left a wonderful memory in our hearts. Your wonderful sense of humor, your wonderful generosity and

your wonderful career out of making people laugh will never be forgotten. No one can ever fill your wonderful shoes.

“The family chain has been broken, however, the legacy continues with your wonderful five grandchildren, and their ten little feet whose shoes you’ve never tied. Jamie, Dean II, Jon, Morgan and Madeline will always know what a true ‘Joey’ you were.

“If you could see us now... tomorrow and forever. Love: Mary, Julie and Randy, Jeff and Dawn.”

Today, wife Mary continues to drive a school bus--something she’s done for 30 years. She is very proud of her handsome family, as depicted in the photo below. The entire family remains in the Des Plaines, Illinois vicinity. They meet regularly at the cemetery for family picnics, and to beautify and enhance husband/dad/grandpa’s ‘green roof’.

Two of Dean and Mary’s grandsons have entered the world of entertainment and/or travel. Jon, aged 12, has created a clown character, and seems to be following in Dean’s footsteps. He is adept in doing balloon sculpturing. Dean Richard Weiss II is a member of People to People and is presently in Europe as a student ambassador. In many ways he resembles his grandfather.

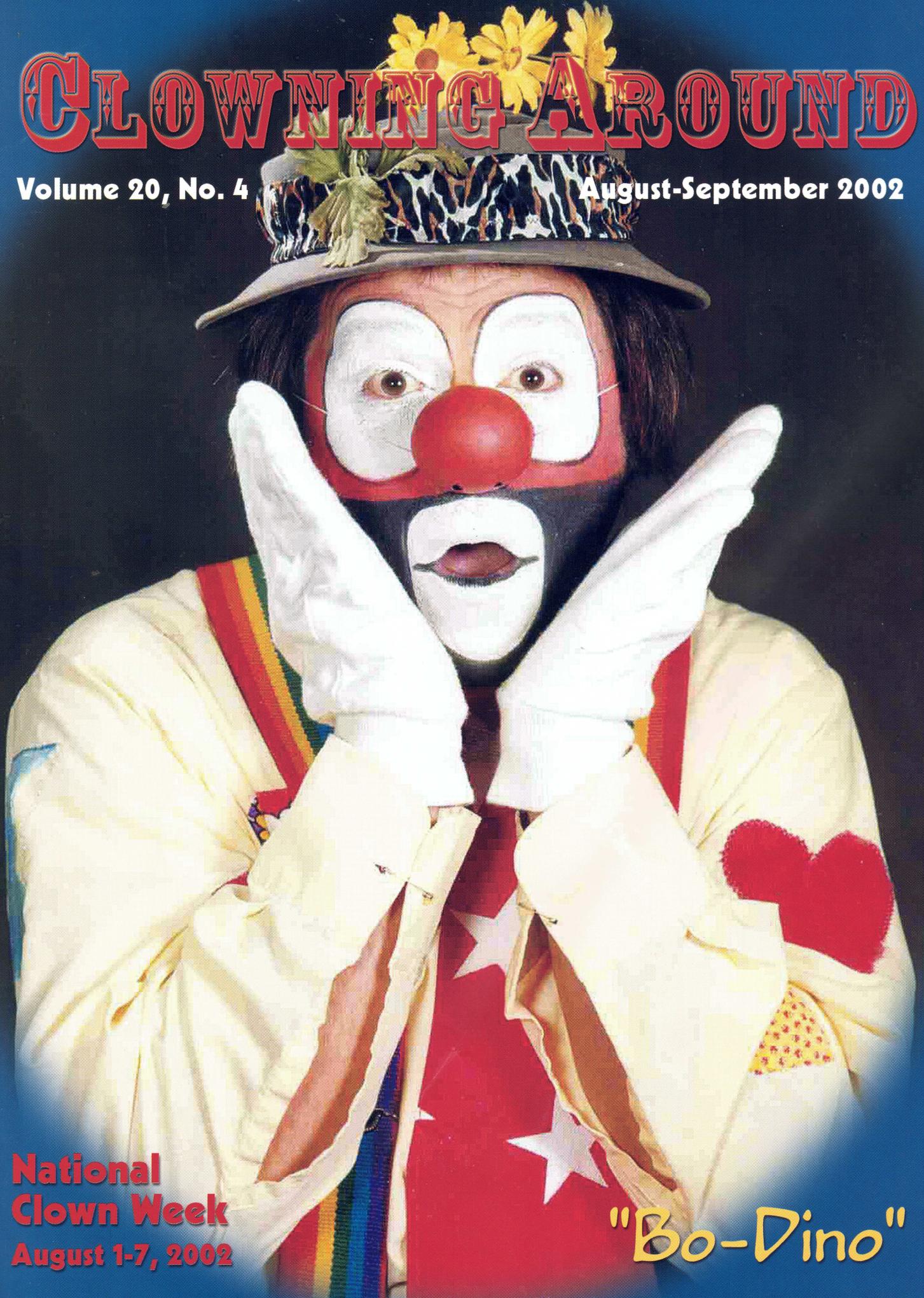
We, members of the World Clown Association, are proud to likewise be honoring and carrying forward the memory and spirit of Dean Weiss. ■



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