

# Hospital Clown Newsletter

## The Gentle Art of The Caring Clown

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**Meet Mini.** She was born two days after Minnie Pearl, the Grand Old Opera star passed away. Mini has little glasses perched on a pink nose over bright pink eyes. She wears a straw hat with a price tag (like Minnie Pearl) Mini lives in my blue and white polka-dot hat and she is a magician! (She is also a rabbit puppet, but don't tell her that!) Inside HER hat are stored various magic tricks. She disappears into the hat pokes around, finds a trick and out it comes. The kids love it 'cause she has a messy hat and can never find the right trick.

Mini is born to a line of magicians who perform with me at the hospital. Not having a partner clown to work with, I developed my magician friends. Birdie Bird, my main man, (shown with me on page 2) has been with me a long time and tried his hand at magic in India and Russia.

Magic is something I never thought I'd do until one day, about the second week I was working at the hospital. Cute "little" Shobi Dobi bounced into a hospital room full of 15 year old Oakland guys playing their rap music. Yeah. . . . "Come here clown!" The guys were kind enough, but it was definitely a clown fall. I called on Steve Dawson of the Magic Touch, a friend of our alley, for help. I got it!

There are three kinds of magic as I see it. The sleight of hand, the gimmicks and the production numbers. The "sleight of hand" type takes time to learn -- it is a real skill to use up close. (See page 7) The production numbers are large, need to be done from a stage and/or need to be loaded (prepared for every trick). Where on hospital rounds do you load the trick? Usually it means it's a trick you can use only once a day.

There are many gimmick tricks that are effective and can even be done by a six-inch rabbit on one hand! Here are some of the ones I've found.

They can be done by anyone with a little practice in front of a mirror.

The Color Changing Scarves simply changes the colors of two scarves (buy the silk ones not the cheap nylon ones). It is colorful, easy to do and even Birdie can do it with his beak!

The Mini Change Bag is great for making anything disappear, reappear and back again. It is 2½x 3½ inches, with a velvet bag. The gimmick is very simple and so small it is easy to load. Mini looks so cute using it, that is, after she's found it in HER Hat!

The Growing Goshman SpongeBall makes a small ball change into a larger one. I hold the ball in my left hand and Mini covers it with a scarf, waves her hand over it with her magic words. They are silent, as Mini doesn't speak. She whispers into my ear a lot. I listen and then speak for her. This is one of Birdie Bird's favorite tricks. He tries to make it disappear, but because he has trouble with his "b's," he says "abracadabra" wrong. And the ball gets bigger instead of disappearing.

Teen age boys love card tricks. I teach them and they teach me. I get used cards from a local casino. You can also buy easy card tricks very inexpensively just about anywhere. The kids love to be able to show their friends and family. It empowers them. For your own credibility you need a "knock your socks off" trick to really get their attention. It's worth investing in a few good magic tricks--you'll have them the rest of your life. However, magic can be very expensive. Pick out something that can be done right in front of the patient and can be done over and over (room to room) without a load.

My polka-dot hat can be made from Butterick pattern 3470 and now there is a puppet pattern available.

-- Shobi Dobi

