

A View from the Other Side . . . of the Funny Bone Repair Unit

By Allen "Boomer" Bryant



*Boomer a.k.a. Allen Bryant of Boise Idaho had knee replacement surgery in March. Right after surgery, he was visited by his clown pals from **The Funny Bone Repair Unit**, a clown alley dedicated to hospital clowning. They asked Boomer to critique the Unit's hospital clown visit. Following are Boomer's comments to his alley.*

"Clowns present were SnickerDoodle, Pinky, Wally, and Ruthie. I know other clowns were present on rounds, but these are the clowns that worked my room. If I have left anyone out it is purely my mistake – either that or all the drugs I was taking. Sorry I don't recall the time. The patient was myself, so I had a rare opportunity to see first hand how all this foolishness plays out.

"I want to preface my review by stating that the last thing I wanted this day was a visitation. I was in an incredible amount of pain. In fact the clowns showed up during my CPM therapy. (This is a machine that bends your knee continuously) Sounds like fun doesn't it? Right after knee replacement! The clowns are already down by one because of my mental state and the pain I was in.

"They all came in and greeted me. This was nice. I would like to point out for future visits to the hospital that people in pain don't want to answer a lot of questions. It's hard enough just getting through the pain without having to think about answering questions. These clowns did a good job with this. They had a few tricks, stickers etc that were nice but not really needed for an adult patient. There was a far bigger impact just on having the Caring Atmosphere in the room. This surprised me. I really thought the magic and stickers played bigger than that. This is hard to explain, just believe me clowns made a huge impact just by being there. You didn't have to do anything, just be there. That was really nice.

"The clowns were with me for quite awhile. I forgot about the CPM machine, the pain I was experiencing and not wanting a visit. I think it's important to note that time perhaps worked in the clown's favor. I wasn't going anywhere, so they could stay as long as they wanted / or as long as I wanted.

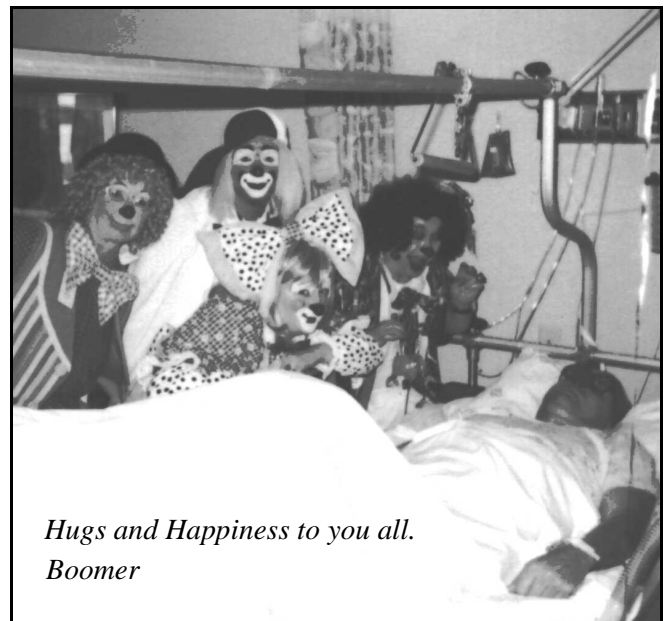
"Remember this: Spend the time necessary with everyone you see. You may not see everyone, but the ones you do will truly have a wonderful experience. I know I go against conventional theory with the last remark but I believe it more now than ever. The time spent with every patient doesn't need to be 30 minutes. I'm not

saying that. You may spend 1 minute here, 3 minutes there and perhaps 15 minutes at another patient's room. I'm just saying that I believe we limit ourselves when we set time limits on our visits. The extended visit time I received was needed and appreciated. It had a huge impact on my recovery and my mental attitude. I went from positively depressed with incredible pain to, positive outlook and hurting. Attitude has a huge effect on recovery and thankfully mine was adjusted. I am in your debt.

"*The bubble bath.* Hopefully you all are doing a version of this. The clowns surrounded my bed as best they could. They all took out their bubble bottles and wands and proceeded to shower bubbles over me. The visual looking up from the bed is almost worth the price of admission. I don't know if my reaction to this was a result of the drugs / high fever or spiritual. I'm serious here, folks. My entire body had a cool wave slowly flowing over it. It was very uplifting and most invigorating. The part I found especially interesting was that bubbles could still be found under my bed 6 hours later.

"In summary, I would have to say that I had a 100% attitude change, my spirits were lifted, my pain level decreased (I actually got through the 2 hours with the CPM on). I got moved from the hospital to the rehabilitation unit later that same day. The doctor even said he was ready to release me come Sunday if my insurance wouldn't cover the rehab costs. I'm home now, using 75% less pain medication than when at the hospital. Caring Clowning makes a huge difference. You all make a huge difference. I'm lucky in that I can thank my clown doctors. You really made a difference.

"The Polaroid picture was a great memento. If this isn't done on a regular basis we should think of buying a few. The picture had a much bigger impact than the stickers and shtick. It will be placed in my photo album. The picture quality isn't that good, but the memory it recalls is priceless."



*Hugs and Happiness to you all.
Boomer*

With Boomer are: Linda "Pinky" Lau, Andrew "Wally" Pappas, Mary "SnickerDoodle" O'Brien, and Caryn "Ruthie" Abrams