

It's a Small World After All

A Clown Adventure in the Ukraine
from Dean Cotton of Fayetteville, Georgia



In an orphanage near the City of Zhytomer. above the clowns are from the left back: Dean Cotton *Dean O T. Clown*; Pastor Paul (non clown), Chris McCaskill ~ *Otto Mobile*. In front from the left Sammi McCaskill ~ *Teensy*, and Kathy Stell ~ *Ditzzy Doodle*

On June 1, 2007, four clowns and one non-clown from Fayetteville, Georgia set off for a mission to the Ukraine. The plan was to visit the village of Zubery and the city of Zhytomer.

We had prepared a 45 minute program to entertain and share love through laughter with school children and children in orphanages. Most of the program was designed to be performed with background music only and no words. The rest used an interpreter.

In the five days of clowning, we presented our program in twelve different places (seven in Zubery and five in Zhytomyr) to a total of 1400 children. (We had taken only 1100 red foam noses with us. We will have to take a few more next time!) Most performances were in schools, three in orphanages, two camp settings and one community center. The result was joy, laughter and a smile on every face. After the programs we gave red foam noses, goodie bags, cards (which had pictures of the four clowns and the bible verse John 3:16 in Ukrainian), and devotional books. You can see in the picture the big smiles and red clown noses.

At one orphanage we visited a goat followed us into the auditorium. It was content to hang around with us until our interpreter put a foam clown nose on the goat. Then it took off outside. (and we never saw it again !)

We also had the privilege of talking to and doing skits for an English class at the University in Zhytomyr. We had the full attention of the seventeen University students as we talked in our native English and presented a few of our skits.

At one of the orphanages a few of us were surprised after the program to have a woman speak to us in perfect English. It turned out that she was from Indiana and working in the orphanage for several weeks during the summer. She said that when she heard that there would be "American clowns" there she just had to come and see us. It is a small world after all.

In the village of Zubery we stayed with a pastor and his family. They do farming in addition to the ministry work. The farm was several acres of land with a river in back and three cows, chickens, and ducks. The toilet room was located in the barn building which was separated from the house across the barnyard. There was a gaggle of baby ducks that wandered the barnyard during the day and usually were put in a box in the barn for the night.

One night Sammi (Teensy the clown) got up in the night to "answer the call of nature." She tip-toed out of the house past those of us sleeping in various parts of the house, outside to the toilet room. After turning on the light and sitting down she heard a noise. Looking behind the toilet she found she was not alone..... the baby ducks had found their way into room and were hiding behind the toilet. Needless to say Sammi was startled,

We may have brought clowns and red noses and joy and laughter to children that appreciated it more than we can imagine, but we were blessed at least as much to be able to do it. We are all hoping for a chance to go back.

DeanoTClown@aol.com