



Greasepaint makes the transformation into Rags the clown.

Her clowning around charms the children

By ROSE WEBER

She deftly smooths black greasepaint over her cheeks and chin. A few quick strokes and exaggerated eyebrows appear. White paint transforms the familiar smile into a huge turned down mouth.

A few quick dabs of spirit glue fasten the huge red rubber nose and the balding brown wig to her face.

Next the patched baggy pants and ragged coat with the dead flower pinned to the lapel are added to the frayed white collar and polka dotted tie with its cloth-espina tiebar.

Clapping the battered green felt hat to her head, Rags the Clown is ready to charm the youngsters of Lathrup Village.

AFTER THREE YEARS Pat Organ is a familiar sight to Village kids in her clown costume. And a welcome sight, too, for her pockets are always bulging with candy and bubble gum.

"But I always take a quick look at their mouth before I hand them the gum," she said. "I don't want to ruin a million dollars of silver work."

Rags the clown made her first appearance at McIntyre School for daughter, Kim's class. Then a friend asked her to entertain the children at the Community Congregational Church nursery school.

"And now I make about four appearances a year at the church, the schools and our annual parade," she said.

If the costume rings a bell in your memory, you're right. She copied the costume of Emmett Kelly's Willy the clown.

One of her most treasured possessions is a Willy doll which she has had for 17 years.

The first time she wore the outfit she won first prize at a costume party. She imitated Kelly's entire act including the loaf of bread and pathetic offering of a piece to everyone without saying a word.

"In fact, they never did know I was the one who won the prize. It was part of my act to be completely silent. But I don't do that with the kids," she said.

SHOW BUSINESS is old stuff to Mrs. Organ who as Pat Ann Morris toured the United States for four years singing musical comedy songs.

She got her start singing with her father's barbershop quartet. They had a paying engagement and the tenor dropped out. So Pat volunteered to replace him and to her father's astonishment turned in a good performance.

"I even made a record and had fan clubs, but I have no desire to go

back to show business. I have enough to do with my family," she said.

Daughter Kim is proud of her mother the clown, but youngest daughter Kris wrinkles her nose and shakes her head no when asked if she likes it.

"And the dog barks and carries on terrifically until he finds out it's really me. As for my husband he thinks it's fun, but he won't kiss me," she said.

Not being kissed is only one of the penalties to the clown act.

She always carries the bottle of spirit gum in case her nose falls off or, as happens frequently, a youngster grabs it and pulls it off. "And once while picking a flower to go in my lapel I was stung by a bee. And once I'm in costume the nose won't let me drink coffee or smoke. But that's alright, I love to do it," she said.

And the kids of Lathrup Village love her too. They tell her so.

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