



Contributed photo

Jamie Coventry and Natasha Kaluza.

CLOWN SCHOOL CONNECTION

Before discovering clowning, Jamie Coventry and Natasha Kaluza were once unhappy with their jobs.

They became friends at San Francisco Circus Center Clown Conservatory in 2002, but before that the two were working office jobs that left them unsatisfied.

They had studied theater in college, but were unable to find a career after graduation.

“Clown school changed my life,” Coventry said, chuckling.

Coventry & Kaluza’s clown career has taken them as far as Europe and Japan to perform. Their act earned them the “Best Comedy/Clown Act” award two years in a row at the American Circus Festival. It wasn’t until last year that they started booking county fairs, however.

Because many county fairs often feature more than one clown act, Coventry & Kaluza are always looking for ways to make their show unique.

Near the end of their show, Kaluza catches up to 50 hula hoops thrown by Coventry with no strings attached, which is rare among circus performers, Coventry said.

Shows at 12:45 p.m., 3 p.m. and 7:15 p.m., Les Schwab stage.

PROFESSIONAL FUNNY WOMAN

It’s impossible to place Heather Pearl’s entertainment act into one singular category.

Better known by her stage name, Mz. Pearl, she has been performing professionally for 20 years, combining magic, physical comedy, clown acts, juggling and stilt-walking, just to name a few. Performing in a wide variety of roles and entertainment venues, Pearl is

simply referred to as a “Professional Funny Woman.”

Pearl’s act at the Umatilla County Fair will consist of a European-style clown performance, distinguished by its character-driven, light makeup and physical style of comedy. Pearl will also perform tricks such as juggling and plate spinning. Her show relies heavily on audience participation,

mainly from children, although she aims to draw in all age groups.

“A lot of times at the end of a show parents will say, ‘Wow, my kids liked the show and I did too,’” Pearl said. “People have preconceived notions about clowns. But a lot of people are pleasantly surprised.”

Shows at noon, 2:15 and 4:30 at the Les Schwab Stage.



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Mz. Pearl will entertain at the 2016 Umatilla County Fair.

Magician turns hypnotist, to mystify fair audience

Don Slone will welcome an old friend to his new Umatilla County Fair.

Magician and hypnotist Jeff Martin first met Slone at an Oregon Fairs Association showcase a decade ago when Martin was giving an example of his act to a small crowd.

Slone, who took over as Umatilla County Fair manager earlier this year, approached Jeff and his wife, Pam, and offered them a spot in his former Harney County Fair. Slone proudly boasts that he was the first fair manager in Oregon to hire Jeff as a magician and hypnotist.

Once Slone became manager of Umatilla County Fair, he knew he wanted Jeff as one of this year’s entertainment acts.

Jeff will perform both magic and hypnosis shows on the Les Schwab Stage twice a day during the August 9-13 fair.

Jeff has been a professional magician since 1979, but didn’t start performing full time at fairs until 1999. Pam handles the marketing and scheduling for her husband’s act, though she says her main role is to make Jeff look good.

Anywhere from six to nine months of a given year, Jeff and Pam are traveling to shows around the country. Their summers are spent at fairs and festivals where Jeff performs close-up magic, but Jeff also does gospel shows, school shows, motivational speaking and corporate events, among



Contributed photo

Jeff Martin, a magician and hypnotist, will perform at the 2016 Umatilla County Fair.

others.

“We do it all,” Pam said.

As if that wasn’t enough, Jeff also recently graduated from hypnosis school. Jeff took classes from Las Vegas-based hypnotist Marc Savard over a two-year span before adding it

to his entertainment arsenal last summer.

Jeff said he has been well-acquainted with hypnosis since childhood — his mother was a hypnotist — but never received formal training until well into his adult life.

Magic and hypnosis are synonymous for many entertainers. In fact, Jeff said five or six of the top hypnotists in the country are former magicians.

“The gist of the show construction is very similar,” Jeff said. “It’s more like an improv show, but your subjects come out of the audience.”

Magic shows at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., hypnotist shows at 5:15 p.m. and 8 p.m., Les Schwab stage.



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Mark and Dre have been performing their comedy routine for 20 years.

Chaos and a little IMPROVISATION

Coming from different performing backgrounds, Mark Bunnell and Andrea Terry discovered their crossover potential as a duo.

Now known as Mark & Dre, they’ve performed together since 2000, when they both took part in starting the Carnival of Chaos — a blend of vaudeville, cabaret and cirque comedic theater — in San Francisco.

Since then, they’ve developed an old variety-style show,

incorporating prop comedy, musical parody and sketch comedy. More simply, all of their shows have a moment of surprise, chaos and improvisation, Terry said.

Bunnell performed solo for many years in the genres of street-style and motivational comedy, while Terry came from a collaborative background in theater and musical production.

Between Bunnell’s experience entertaining kids and Terry’s

musical skills in adult shows, the two realized they were able to bring together completely different audiences. Being able to play off the male-female dynamic and combine the silly with the sophisticated allows them to tap into many different senses of humor.

“You need that at a fair,” Terry said.

Shows at 1:30, 3:45 and 6:30 p.m. at the Les Schwab Stage.