

## Meeting Jackie LeClaire By Janet Tucker



*I have so many wonderful memories of Clown Camp® but the one I want to share is one of those special moments that you get to keep in your heart and think about when you need a lift.*

*I had been a staff person at Clown Camp® for many years but generally only for one week of each summer, so I had missed meeting some of the staff people who might have only come for an alternate week. The first year that Jackie Le Claire came to Camp, apparently I was on staff one week and he was there a different week so I had not met him but several people from my home area came back after camp and talked glowingly about Jackie Le Claire. They raved about his clowning and his history and his gentle spirit and much more. I did my homework and found out who he was and some of*

*his history and I was very impressed. I was also kind of jealous that others in my alley had met him and I had not.*

*The following summer I was asked to be on staff and the first thing I did was check to see if Jackie would be there too. Yes, he was listed the same week as I was and I couldn't wait to meet him. The Friday evening before Camp started, the staff was invited to Richard's house for a get-together and I got there early so I wouldn't miss a moment of seeing the famous Jackie. Several of us were sitting and talking with Richard and Jan when he came in and he immediately walked right across the room, said "You're Janet Tucker and I've been waiting to meet you!" I was in shock and stammered out something unintelligible as he sat down beside me to chat. It was then that I learned that a friend of mine, Sue Kowalski, who had been in my clown class at Purdue University in 1977, was his closest neighbor and Sue and Fred did everything with him and for him, such as bringing him to the airport for his trip to Camp. I had known Sue Kowalski, her sister-in-law Gail, and her brother Jim Dillon for many years. Gail is in my home alley, Jim was the owner of a small circus that my daughter and I clowned for, and we had all become clowns about the same time. Sue had been telling Jackie all about me and that he had to be sure to look me up and that night I got a super thrill to be able to spend a lot of time and friendly conversation with Jackie Le Claire, the man I had been waiting to meet – who had also been waiting to meet me. (Janet Tucker-Hammond, Indiana)*