

Milky leaves warm, lasting memories for a devoted fan

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We shivered excitedly in the chilly green room at Channel 4 studios. Clad in paper-thin Brownie uniforms, we watched the monitor and waited our turn to compete in the relay race.

Maybe, just maybe, we'd get the chance to sink our hands inside Milky's legendary penny bowl.

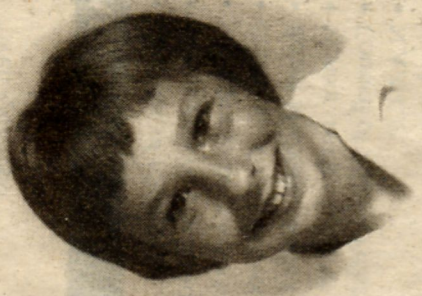
In the '50s, Milky the Twin Pines Clown was my hero — an icon, a screen giant, the king of the Saturday

kiddie shows. And Twin Pines milk was my drink.

Milky was an imposing figure, dressed from head to toe in white, his face painted like a mime's with a wide, gap-toothed, scarlet-rimmed grin and diamond eyes. His crisp, mesmerizing voice was unforgettable.

Unlike Soupy Sales, Captain Jolly, Sagebrush Shorty or the other local kiddie show stars of early television, Milky wasn't just a personality, nor was he merely a clown; he was a real, live magician. He performed amazing

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Patty LaNoue Stearns at 10 years old



Milky the clown's magic still stirs warm memories

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tricks and even offered a wooden disappearing-coin-trick box that we could send away for so we could do magic along with him — and say the magic words: "Twin Pines."

Week after week I sat riveted to my black-and-white Muntz TV set, clutching my colored aluminum tumbler full of Twin Pines chocolate milk, watching my beloved Milky, wishing I could be on his show.

My mom had three half-gallons of Twin Pines milk delivered to our house every other day. Thinking he had an "in" with Milky, I begged our milkman, Mr. Rice, to let me ride on his route one Saturday, hoping that when he pulled into his terminal to pick up more bottles, Milky would magically appear. That never happened, but the ride was a blast.

Every kid I knew was dying to get on "Milky's Movie Party." It took years on a waiting list. By the time I made it to the show, it was on a different channel and called "Milky's Party Time."

It was the thrill of my life, all 10 years of it, a gift to me and the other members of Allen Park Brownie Troop 602 from our troop leaders. They gave us a big send-off as we graduated to Girl Scouts.

We were ushered into the studio behind a thick plate-glass window. A man told us that when we saw the "applause" signal, we should clap and holler and carry on. He said that if we clapped *really* loud and cracked the

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window, we would all win bowls of pennies. What an incentive!

Milky gabbed with his rabbit-puppet pal, Creamy. There was a show within his show about a weird puppet and his human pal, Willie Do-it. Milky's "Stars of Tomorrow" segment featured kids tap-dancing, playing the accordion or singing horrible versions of show tunes.

Then the highlight of the show — the relay race, wherein we got to meet *the man*, Milky, who supervised the race. We competed with another group. Whichever group won got to scoop their fingers into the penny bowl actually a large fish bowl. Pennies were worth something back in 1960, and depending on the size of our hands, we could go home with big money.

Mine were huge.

We ran back and forth and picked stuff off the floor and tapped each other on the back and everybody yelled and screamed, though nobody broke the plate glass. When it was all over, my group won.

I stood in line with clammy palms. Magnificent Milky stood by the fishbowl congratulating us. This was my magic Milky moment. I looked up at him in awe and was so nervous I couldn't utter a sound. Not even "I love

through the small hole at the top. Same thing with the right hand. Lots of pennies slid back into the bowl.

But I hit the jackpot anyway. Exactly 248 pennies. Big hands. Big money. A very big deal.

Thanks for the magic, Milky.

Clare Cummings, known to thousands of Detroit baby boomers as Milky the Twin Pines Clown, died Monday at the age of 82. A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday at A.J. Desmond & Sons Funeral Home, 4375 N. Woodward, Royal Oak.

you, Milky," like I'd planned. He winked and smiled and pushed me along as he handed me a little paper bag and told me to dig in. I blew on my cold fingers, stuck my left hand in, grabbed, then squeezed my hand