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OFFBEAT USA

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE NEWS

Presidential candidates are just clowning around

WASHINGTON — Two men with painted faces and funny suits are running for president. Who are these clowns? Hugh "Wavy Gravy" Romney of Berkeley, Calif., and Larry "Bozo the Clown" Harmon of Los Angeles. Some details:

■ Harmon, who originated the Bozo character 35 years ago, will announce his candidacy for president March 1 at the National Press Club. His "No Bozo" campaign is aimed at young people. "Don't be a Bozo when it comes to drugs, drinking and smoking," is his message, which is depicted by a clown face that's circled and crossed with the international "no" symbol. Harmon, retired from his long-running, nationally syndicated Bozo the Clown television show, does public service work across the USA.

■ Romney, a 1960s counter-culture hero, is already traipsing around the USA in his star-spangled clown suit, touting his Nobody for President campaign. "Nobody knows everything about the economy," he said. "Nobody has found a safe place for nuclear wastes and, most of all, nobody cares." Romney, 47, runs a clown camp for kids and entertains disabled children. He may be best known for his one line in the movie of the Woodstock Festival in 1969. "What we have in mind," he shouted to the crowd, "is breakfast in bed for 400,000 people."