



Arthur Drooker spent three years photographing American conventions and found that great minds think alike — and fools seldom differ

# NO LAUGHING AT THE BACK

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**WILD FIN**  
Mertending,  
Merfest, Cary, North  
Carolina, 2015



**HAPPY FEET** Previous  
pages and top right:  
World Clown Association,  
Northbrook, Illinois, 2014



**HAIL TO THE CHIEFS**  
Association of Lincoln  
Presenters, Natchez,  
Mississippi, 2014



The prospect of being trapped in a room full of clowns may be the stuff of nightmares for some, but not Arthur Drooker. The San Francisco-based photographer relished the opportunity to mingle with members of the World Clown Association, a colourful contingent of circus fans. And that's just for starters. Over the last three years, Drooker has spent his weekends hanging out with mermaids, Santas, furry animals and US presidents for his latest project, *Conventional Wisdom*, an ode to the weird and wonderful world of American conventions.

Drooker chose 10 of the most unusual and photogenic events, and immersed himself fully, visiting each several times. At first glance, they appear to have little in common, but Drooker soon found a universal theme. "Regardless of what they're about, where they are held, or who attends them, all conventions satisfy a basic human urge: the need to belong," says Drooker. "I felt the inevitable letdown when a convention ended. It meant returning to real life, which is oh-so-dull by comparison." ■

*Conventional Wisdom* by Arthur Drooker, with a foreword by James Wolcott is published tomorrow (Glitterati, £35). For more information, visit: [conventionalwisdom.com](http://conventionalwisdom.com)

**FATHER'S DAY**  
Santa Drill Team,  
Santa Celebration,  
Tampa, Florida 2013

