

BACK YARD

Volume V, Issue #94

June 30, 2000

"Let's Take A Walk Down Memory Lane With The Polack Bros. Shrine Circus"

By Cherie Valentine

Let's start with the Alzafar Shrine Circus in San Antonio Nov. 1-7 in 1948! This was the 5th annual Shrine Circus. Display No. 1 featured Clowns Ed Raymond & Bobo Barnett, with his dogs and trumpet, followed by the Skyland Ballet featuring Helaine, Vicki Berosini, Millie Keathley, Para Sombiasi, Reggie Reppart & Jo Madison.

Next came Billy Barton, youthful cloud swing; Chai & Somay, acrobatic; Arthur Konyot & Dorita, equestrian excellence by an eminent European master & his charming daughter; Clowns with Bobo Barnett, Ed Raymond, Harry Dann, Dukie Anderson, Charley Raimer, Morris Gebhart, Steve

Gottlieb, Leonard Pearson, and Dennis Stevens; Harold Barnes, tight wire; Para & Nino, foot-balanced ladders, the Mustafas, acrobatics, the Bounding Warbels, tumbling; Dwight Moore's Mongrel Revue; Berosini Troupe, high wire with Josephine, "the only girl ever to make the ascent and descent on a steep inclined cable," with brother Otto; the Ivanov Troupe, horizontal bars; Great Francisco, sway pole; Frank Whitbeck's Movie Elephants, "seen in the Tarzan movies and "Till Clouds Roll By," with barrel roll by Happy,

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ELLY ARDELTY
Trapeze Artist



Beauty and the Beasts—Klausser's Bears

JEANNINE
PIVOTEAU



Do You Know WHERE SHE IS NOW?

A Great Visit to Circus Pages!

By Cherie

Circus Pages played Bloomington, IL to great crowds at the Sale Barn. This is a First Class Circus! Beautiful wardrobe, fast moving, great music and the audience not only enjoyed the acts, but were really lined up to ride the camel and ponies and again lined up after the show to have their pictures taken with Daisy. No animal activists here! All the animals were very healthy and well-cared for. In fact, they have the biggest camel I have ever seen plus a huge lion, Simba, 7.

I was on the Beatty show with Freida and Jorge and have known Freida (Logan) since 1974. This is one show where you are made to feel welcome and I would like to thank these two for doing just that! And what a great family they have. Brian Nunn also visited and appreciates the time Jorge & Freida spent with us. We did miss visiting with Freddie and Omi Logan, who are now on Beatty.

Jorge presented the opening act with 2 tigers and 2 lions, followed by an audience participation act that went over very well with the crowd. Their daughter, Colleen, was next with a gorgeous single trapeze act. I had tears in my eyes as I watched her work, remembering when I was her age, 9. She does more tricks than older girls do! And this is her first year on the trapeze!

James Earhart, the Ringmaster, then presented his poodle act. It's great the way he announces and works at the same time! The Pages' daughter, Vicenta, 14, next performed with her horse, trained by Evy Karoly. A beautiful act. James and Colleen were next doing acrobatics on the bicycle-fantastic! Following were Jorge in one ring with Major, 7, a camel raised on Dave Hale's farm. The music was perfect for Major's act. It was "I Feel Good," and Major seemed to stride around the ring to the music! In the other ring, Freida presented her ponies. I was enjoying watching Major's head bob up and down to the music so much and laughing, that I didn't catch all of the pony act! Sorry! Next was foot juggling with Luis and Walo Poso. The

kids in the audience really enjoyed these two. At intermission they had camel and pony rides and a moon bounce. The ride camel was the biggest camel I have ever seen, J.J.! His feet are enormous. I felt a hot breath on my neck and when I turned around, I was face-to-face with him. Thanks, Jorge! You could have your picture taken on the camel ride. J.J. was perfectly happy to wait for riders by chomping on slices of white bread. So, when you go to see Circus Pages, take along a loaf or two for the camels and give it to Jorge. I noticed it was an inexpensive brand. I was proud to see all the people lined up for rides-hopefully, that will keep Circus Pages coming back to Bloomington!

After intermission, there was low wire with Luis and his father. The audience can really appreciate this family show, with so many young people performing and this crowd wasn't afraid to let them know. The music is also perfect for every act and gets the crowd in a good mood from the beginning. Pages' oldest daughter, Vicenta, was next on the Roman Rings. We told Jorge he is going to have his hands full with two beautiful daughters! Freida and Jorge can be very proud of the way they have raised their family. And watch out, young ladies-they also have a very handsome son, Jorgie, 3.

Jorge's sister, Yolanda, who is also James' wife, performed next with "Cider", an Appaloosa with a long-line act, also trained by Evy. Lovely act. Next was a comedy act, followed by the family Elephant act, with Daisy and Bambi. Unfortunately, little Jorgie fell asleep before the act, so we didn't get to see him perform! What can I say-great act, beautiful costumes and great music. A perfect ending to a perfect show. And just like the Big Apple, the audience isn't very far away from the performers and animals! To see these beautiful animals up close is really a treat for everyone. So, when Circus Pages comes to your area, do not miss it! When we left, the parking lot was filling up for the second show! People come back year after year for a show like this. Thanks again to the Pages for a great show and a great visit!

Mozart wants to go next year!

POLACK BROS. SHRINE CIRCUS...

the hula by Queenie, presented by James (Slivers) and Jo Madison; Fire House, Clowns; Roland Tiebor's Seals with Pat's hand stand on one flipper, Frisco's muscle grind; Count Ernesto Wiswell's Dizzy Lizzy; Massamilliano Truzzi, juggling; Ward-Bell Flyers featuring the 2 1/2.

The San Francisco Polack Bros. Shrine Circus was held May 19-29 and had Billy Griffin greeting you at the door, Harry Dann's "Grand Illusion," and Bobby Kellogg, asst., Chester & Joe Sherman with their dog, Lucky, Boxing with Otto Griebing & Freddie Freeman, Bobo Barnett with Morris Gebhart, asst., all in a pre-show presentation!

Next came "Hoopla in the Sky," aerial ballet; the Bogino Family, risley; Roberta's Dog and Pony Revue, with Bobby the monkey; Bartone the Great, one finger acrobatics; Natal; Roland Tiebor's Seals with 1 1/2 year old Baby Sadie; Black Horse Troupe with Don Carreon; Alexander Konyot on Kalarama Jr.; Berosini Troupe, high wire; the 4 Bennies, with Smoky the Mule; Gudzov's Scotch Collies; Chai and Somay, acrobatics; 3 Girls From Hollywood, with Jo & Slivers Madison; 4 Cycling Sidneys and the Seven Ward-Bell Flyers.

The 1950 Polack program is from Stockton, Calif., April 24-30, with pre-show the same as 1949, with Rudy Ducky added. Aerial Ballet opened the show followed by LaLage, rings & one-arm swings; Woolford's Dachshunds; Hubert Castle, wire; Melitta & Wicons, perch pole; Emil Pallenberg, Jr., bears, featuring the motorcycle riding Fu; the Shyrettos, cycling; Giustino Loyal-Repensky Family, featuring Miss Zefta; 3 Girls From Hollywood, with Happy, Queenie & Sally; Alfredo Landon's Midgets, acrobatics; Rose Gould Trio, aerial; Rudy Ducky's Basketball-Playing Boxers; Linon, clown pantomimist; Sikorska Duo, aerial perch; 7 Brannocks, teeterboard; 7 Ward-Bells.

The April 30-May 6, 1951 Stockton Polack Circus featured Harry Dann on the program cover. This program was different-instead of the line-up, it featured photos and articles of the performers. The

new producing clown was Gene Randow. He took over the responsibilities of his father Gene, Sr., when he died in his dressing room in 1948 on the Eastern unit. Gene's father was born in Budapest and his mother, Centa, came from Circus Schumann. Gene Jr. was born in the NY rooming house of bicycle clown, Joe Jackson, just a few months before Joe Jackson Jr.

Next, the Ibarra Brothers performed on the horizontal bars, with Juan, Vincente and Ignacio; Arwoods' Acro K-9 Antics with Claude Crumley and Jeanne McConnell, Jet, black poodle, Buffie, Chihuahua and fox terriers.

Don Dorsey performed next on the high trapeze. In 1948, he fell 50' in Vancouver while on Polack. He was born in Fall River, MA and his mother was a unicycle rider in vaudeville.

The Hargus Troupe (named for Harold Ward and Gus Bell) performed tumbling & teeterboard, starting with 12 people. They wore letters that spelled out Polack Circus when the season started but a mishap involving several members caused a decrease in personnel. The "understander" was Claude Crumley of the dog act.

Jack Joyce's Camels followed featuring Aussie, Tiny, Sydney and Cougee, then the Reducing Machine with Dennis Stevens (nurse), Gene Randow (inventor) and Harry Dann (doctor). The reduced victim was Henry Boers who came to the U.S. with Ike Rose's Midgets. "Dennis was born in Batavia, NY and became a clown 14 years ago and has been with Polack 9 seasons."

Next, the Sing Lee Sings Gymnastics. "Lai Fong Chang left the act early in the season to await the stork. The fellow who took her place is Chai Huang of Chai & Somay-Somay also quit to be a mother! Also in the act are Hugh Sang Chang & Chuckie For, their partner since their days in China. Hung and Chuckie both served in the U.S. armed forces during WW II."

The Sikorskas, from Sweden, perform aerial perch with teeth-suspension and later perform perch pole

(Continued on Page 6)

CAPT. KEN IN NEW ENGLAND

By Mike Cecere

Here's another of our continuing chronicles of the travels of Capt. Ken. To regular Backyard readers, that means the one and only Capt. Ken Turtle Benson, his close companion the huge, gentle giant Boo, and their mascot Martin, The Wonder Dog!

They tour with small-town America's favorite circus, Roberts Bros. And by the time this sees print, they should be moving towards their annual tour of scenic New England hamlets. They go places where the big shows could never fit, to places where even the cast of the show outnumbers the posted population at the city limits.

But at showtime, they come from every hill and dale, filling the tent with the laughter of happy, children and applause of families appreciative of live family entertainment. What's more, Capt. Ken is reviving a mode of presentation of Elephants by touring the rural backroads of New England.

You see many, many....many moons ago, when Elephants first came to American shores, they toured alone or as parts of traveling menageries all over the North East, at that time the most populous areas of our young country.

Billing themselves more as educational exhibitions, than entertainment, to get around the Sunday bans on frivolous pursuits set by strict clergy, they often would walk the beasts town to town at night to prevent "free shows." And would set up in a barn or stable right in the middle of the villages.

Well, the Roberts Bros. Circus still does that sort of. With a clean neat show, full of people who pick up after themselves and their animal friends, they leave little trace of their one day of magic except "a peanut sack and some wagon tracks".

And an extra special treat is running into people doing the same thing, and once in the great state of Maine the residents get a double treat. For at picturesque York Beach, they get to exchange visits with The Elephant Company there for the summer season with big "Lydia," another big Asian female. Capt. Ken Benson gets to visit with her friendly

owners, Dave and Carmen and chief mahout, Don Wixom. But after an all too brief couple of visits, as the daily upkeep of the great beasts take up a lot of time, it's back on the road across the backroads of New England, town to town, barn to barn, a little piece of Americana. Capt. Ken, "Boo" and oh yes, "Martin" (The Wonder Dog!).

GOD BLESS AMERICA!

News From Our Circus Friends

***Kent Ghirard** writes "the lady on the lower left of the inside back page of #90 is **Kay Clarke Berslem** in Web on **Russell Bros. Circus 1944**. (My parents, **The Flying Valentinos**, were on Russell Bros. in 1943-their contract called for \$200 a week, for 3 people. In **Steve Gossard's Bandwagon** article in 1987, he states, "George suffered an injury in a rigging accident and was forced to miss a few days work. Lorraine could not recall anyone besides George as ever catching for the troupe, but **Sue Pelto** recalled that George did allow **Hank Robbins**, whose wife, **Rose**, lives here in Bloomington, to catch for them when he was laid up. Hank had experience working for **Art Concello's** troupes and he remained a close friend of the Valentine family for many years." I believe George & Lorraine Valentine left Russell Bros. near the end of August that year on the West Coast. Does anyone have any information on this?)

***Bob Sugarman** writes "The 5th meeting of the Circus Interest Group of the **Popular Culture Assn.** takes place April 11-14, 2001 in Philadelphia. Papers are invited that explore the past & present of circus as an art, as a craft and as unique form of popular culture.

Send a 50 word abstract of your paper by Sept. 10 to Bob Sugarman, Circus Culture Chair. If you have questions, e-mail him at bobsugar@sover.net or write him at POB 407, Shaftsbury, VT 05262.

***Bob Kitchen** writes the vote to ban elephants, tigers, lions and bears passed the Rhode Island House by a 51-43 vote. It heads for the Senate by may not make it to vote by the July 1 adjournment.

Polack Bros. Shrine Circus....

as Melitta and Wicons. Harry Dann had a new partner, Duchess, a large, white poodle. "Chester Sherman got his start in show business as a boy soprano in the nickelodeons of Cincinnati and Newport, Ky. Chester was also a tightwire performer before taking up clowning. His brother Joe has been his partner for 18 years."

Francis Brunn's juggling act also features sister, Lotti. Their father, Michael is their manager. "They have taken out papers for American citizenship."

"For 35 years Natal has been making a monkey of himself. His fur suit and mask cost \$1850. His real name is Marc Amede Favetier. His wife, Ida Erna, is a native of Holland & they have Rolland, 8, travelling with them, who wants to be a cowboy.

Next, "Packs' Baby Elephants." "Even before they set foot on American soil, these elephants were celebrities. 'Operation Haylift' made newspaper headlines the world over. While bringing the babies from Siam in 1948, the S.S. Swarthmore Victory, delayed by 2 typhoons, ran out of hay. The captain radioed the Naval Air Station at Alameda that he had hungry youngsters! The Navy sent its biggest flying boat, Marshall Mars, to the rescue. Hay in waterproof bags were dropped in the ocean and retrieved by the ship's crew. Their training was entrusted to Mack MacDonald and his wife, Peggy Henderson. Originally 4-Alice, Jean, Mary and Penny, they later were joined by 2 year-old Tommy.

"While Albert Ostermaier is serving hid adopted country in the 95th Gun Battalion, his Lippizan stallion, Emperor Conversano Neopolitano, is presented by Ernestine Clarke. His other horse, The Genius, is presented by Jack Joyce."

Next, the Mandos Sisters, Jennie & Marguerite, aerial anchor, followed by Goldilocks and the 3 Bears. "Our Goldilocks is lovely Herta Clauson, whose parents, Walter & Maria, appear with her and the bears-a big bear, a middle-sized bear and twin little bears, Sherry and Brandy. Little Brandy hitches a ride on Kathie's gasoline bike!"

Ernie Wiswell performs with his Model T Ford,

along with his wife, Frieda. "Their home is in Erie, Pa.-and can Frieda cook!"

Melitta & Wicons are really Mr. & Mrs. Curt Bokvist, married 6 years ago, are back for their 2nd season. Next is Armand's (Guerre) Seals with Charot, playing the harmonica. The 3 Goetschis are next with cycling presented by Emil, Hans and Carl, from Switzerland. Hans plays the violin while standing on the head of his cycling brother!

"Harold Ward and Gus & Betty Bell were youngsters together on the old Tom Mix Circus when they formed the Ward-Bell Flyers. Gus is an A.A.U. tumbling champion from Dallas and Betty is from Iowa. Millie Keathley made their act a foursome when she joined. In 1949, Harold's brother, Eddie Ward, Jr., and his wife, Dotty, became members. Additions this year are Bob Porter, who with the Ward brothers, is one of three catchers and Jack Harris and Walter Long are on the leapers pedestal." (To Be Continued)

*Professor Pam Riney-Kehrberg formerly of Illinois State University gave me this article out of the *Nebraska Farmer* from November 25, 1916: "Young People," Herman Bretthorst, 14, of Burr, Nebraska, said, "A circus came to Nebraska City a year ago last September and we decided to go in our car. The neighbors all wanted to go too, so when the day came, we had made everything ready. However, that morning it looked rainy and we decided not to go. A few neighbors went by and then our nearest neighbors got ready too. It was 30 miles to Nebraska City and it was about 11 o'clock when we got there. We ate our dinner and then watched the parade. It was fine and consisted of a colored band, a horseback band, elephants and wagons containing wild animals. We went to the performance, which I thought was good. I saw every wild animal and bird of which I had ever heard, excepting a camel and a giraffe. It surely pays to go to a circus." Wow! This was way back in 1916. If anyone knows which circus this might have been, please write and let us know. Those of you with old route cards might be able to find out.

PETA Releases False Information

By Don Wixom, The Elephant Company

A recent Internet release on the PETA website tell of a "complaint" received by PETA alleging that Lydia, 53-year-old Asian elephant, owned by the Elephant Company of Ft. Meade, Florida, "broke free of her handlers and broke through a cyclone fence at York's Wild Kingdom, York Beach, Maine." This accusation is completely untrue! There have been no incidents at York's Wild Kingdom during the Elephant Company's three seasons at the zoo/amusement park.

Additional information sent by PETA to York's Wild Kingdom owners were filled with untrue information and "spins" on past USDA inspection reports. The letter urged termination of the Elephant Company's contract, which should be expected by any circus or independent operator which is targeted by this radical and unreasonable activist group.

The actual facts behind the fence, occurred on June 6th, when Maine experienced an unusual "noreaster" storm, packing cold winds of +40 mph. A temporary, 3 foot chainlink fence which is not anchored, blew over. This barrier is erected each season to keep the zoo's waterfowl from the public sidewalks and elephant arena where they create a substantial mess with their droppings.

Due to inclement weather and a 30° wind chill, The Elephant Company did not work on June 6th. The fence was re-erected prior to opening on June 7th by the zoo staff who secured the fence with stakes. Since the release of this falsehood on the Internet, park owners have received calls from colleagues across the nation. The story has escalated to be not only an elephant running through a fence, but with a load of riders on her back!

We urge everyone in our profession to obtain the facts on any "incident" from reliable sources. Further, make sure the story is real in the first place. Helping spread and embellish unconfirmed rumors not only harms those wrongfully accused, but actually aids the radical rightists. Unflattering and unkind comments only helps to injure our industry

and our battle against the animal rightists. As a side note, the website also states that elephant and camel rides are illegal in Maine which is also untrue.
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Rhode Island House Passes Circus Bill

The bill sponsored by Rep. Antonio Pires would ban anyone outside of an accredited zoo from using live lions, tigers, bears and elephants in a performance or display. "This takes the profit motive out of animal cruelty." He said the animals that would be banned from performing in the state often suffer cruel training to prepare them for the shows.

Rep. Brian Kennedy said the bill discriminates against the circus industry. "There has never been a documented case of abuse of the animals in Rhode Island." He added that circuses generate revenue for local communities and businesses and are enjoyed by many people. "This will end the circus as we know it in the state."

Under the bill, violators would face a fine up to \$5000 per animal or a prison sentence of up to a year. Animals could not be filmed in the state for use in movies or TV, unless done through a zoo.
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News From Our Circus Friends

The Byrd Family Tent will be represented in Jacksonville, Illinois' 4th of July parade. **Rick Purdue** will bring 3 of his miniature circus wagons and the Tent will purchase candy to be tossed out to the kids. One of the wagons has a portable sound system to play circus music. A banner atop a wagon will proclaim that it is an entry of the Bryd Family Tent, Circus Fans Assn. **Nate and Jake Sorrill**, sons of **Mike and Marilyn**, will accompany the wagons on unicycles. Other members of the Tent are invited to march in the parade to help with the candy. The Tent's spring banquet had **David Rawls** as their speaker. Following the program, he posed for pictures with **John Carpenter**, VP; **Charlie Bellatti**, Secretary-Treasurer; **Jay Jamison**, board member; **Mike Sorrill**, board member and **Norm Champion**, President of the Tent. To join the Tent, write: POB 825, Jacksonville, IL 62651.

RINGLING RED: College Station-7/10-12; Houston-7/14-23; Dallas-7/26-8/6; Ft. Worth-8/9-13; Colorado Springs-8/16-20; Wichita-8/24-27; Moline, IL-8/31-9/3; Kansas City-9/6-10; New Orleans-9/14-17; Grand Rapids-9/21-24; Indianapolis-9/27-10/1; Detroit-10/4-9

RINGLING BLUE: Las Vegas-7/5-9; Fresno-7/12-16; Long Beach-7/19-23; Anaheim-7/25-31; L.A.-8/2-6; San Diego-8/9-13; Oakland, CA-8/16-20; San Jose-8/23-27; San Francisco-8/30-9/4; Sacramento-9/6-10; Seattle-9/14-17; Portland-9/21-24; Salt Lake City-9/27-10/1.

"Kaleidoscope": Detroit (Southfield) Mi-6/23-7/16; Pittsburgh-7/28-8/13

BIG APPLE CIRCUS: Charlestown, RI-7/2-10; Hanover, NH-7/13-18; Shelburne, VT-7/20-24

Carson & Barnes: Braintree, MA-7/1; Orange-7/2-3; Rochester-7/4; Tiverton, RI-7/5; Groton, CT-7/6-7; Bridgeport-7/8;

Sterling-Reid Circus: Painesville, OH-6/30-7/2; Akron-7/3-4; Canton-7/5-6; Pittsburgh, PA-7/7-9; New Kingston-7/10-11; Marietta-7/12-13

Beatty-Cole: Hudson, MA-6/30-7/2; Natick-7/3-4; Portland, ME-7/5-7; Rye, NH-7/8-9; Concord, MA-7/10-11; Dalton, MA-7/12-13.

Bentley Bros: Brockton, MA-7/14-16; New Bedford-7/20-23

Circus Smirkus: Dartmouth, MA-7/23-24

Vidbel Circus: Orleans, MA-8/1-3; Little Compton, RI-8/5-6; Mattapoisett-8/7-8; Sudbury-8/9; Marblehead-8/11; Manchester-8/12; Beverly-8/14; N. Andover-8/15-16; Lynn-8/22; Reading, MA-8/31.

UniverSoul Circus: Indianapolis: 7/12-16

Circus Historical Society Convention-Bloomington/Normal, Illinois-9/6-9

Roberts Bros Circus: Londonderry, Vt-7/4; Brunswick, ME-7/27; Merrimack, MA-8/11; Haverhill-8/12; Plainville-8/13; Middleboro-8/15; Norton-8/17; Spencer-8/18; Oxford-8/19

Wenatchee Youth Circus: Liberty Lake-7/1; Wenatchee-7/3-4; Orcas Island-7/8-9; Edmonds-7/11-12;

Roche Harbor-7/14-16; Sequim-7/22-23; Renton-7/26; Moses Lake-7/29; Vancouver-8/4-13; Shoreline-8/20; Federal Way-8/26-27; Metaline Falls-9/2-3; Chelan County Fair-9/6-7

BACK YARD

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CIRCUS HOPE

On June 21, Tanya decided to take a stroll in the parking lot of the Washington, PA Mall, on a dark and rainy night. She wandered until she came upon Home Depot where she was confronted and lead back to her quarters by trainers, police and security people. Her trainer said she got upset when a group of children came near her with toy horns and the sounds of a nearby highway bothered her. The security guard said, "It wasn't anything dangerous, she just went for a walk." Rumor has it Circus Hope has folded and that the owner wants to re-open in August.

News From Our Circus Friends

***Al House** writes the **Felix Adler Tent's** picnic, held annually on **Vidbel's Circus** in **Oradell, NJ**, was held 6/29. **Ward Hall, Khris Allen & Colleen Perkins**, with the white tigers from **Beatty-Cole** are scheduled to attend.

***Kent Ghirard of Hawaii** would like you folks to help identify the photos that have no names. When I buy them, if they have no names, I can't identify the people. So, if you can help name them, please share that information with us!

Remembering the Wheeling Shrine Circus

In the last issue I had posed the question why the Shrine Circus was cancelled and re-scheduled in 1972. Well, Jerry Schaub, of Pittsburgh, answered the question. The show was in the high school stadium and there was a 15' flood level, well, the level then was 22'!

A tragic event occurred during Karl Wallenda's Sky Walk. Richard Guzman was waiting to take the pole from Karl when he touched a live wire and fell to the ground. I just talked to Jenny Wallenda who gave me the details.

Jerry gave me the line-up of the Hubler Shrine Circus he visited in Berea, Ohio: Larry Rothbard and his Chicago Soaring Circus Band; Brunan's tigers; George "Winkie Blinkie" Hubler, lighted lanterns; Justino Zoppe, Jurassic Juggler; Christine's Hoofers; Marvelous Maritza, aerial; Toys of the World, by Geo. "Winkie Blinkie" Hubler; Susan Sherill's Royal Afghans; Geraldo Family, high wire; Delightful Dieter; David Zoppe, monkeys; Brian Franzen, elephants and Cyclones, motorcycle. Heidi Herriott was the Ringmistress. John Rosser was concession manager. Fans attending were Rich Deptula, Steve Schultz, Buzz Robson, Ed and Lynn Limbach and Jerry Schaub. They had a luncheon and meeting and Heidi talked about the session in Washington DC. and answered questions. Jerry said Bill Watson will set up his miniature circus on the Ringling show. Bill writes that he is getting ready for the Terrell Jacobs Ring Show in September. He was nice enough to send me an article he had on the Ray Valentines from 1965 from the Sunday magazine in the Pittsburgh Press. Ray, Jr. was 6! There are 3 pictures accompanying the article. Bill promises to write me about how he met my Uncle Roy and Bill Valentine. Small world isn't it? If anyone else remembers any of the Valentine brothers, my dad, George, Bill, Roy or Fred, please write me. I would love to hear from you.

News From Our Circus Friends

*Pete Kinosh called to rave about Ed Migley's

new show, **Circus Mundial**. It opened in Hartford and then was going to Shea Stadium and Yankee Stadium. They are also going to the Chicago area and San Francisco and an extensive tour of California, closing around Nov. 1 in Orlando.

It is sponsored by General Mills and the whole sidewall has cartoon characters and names of all the cereals on it. Clowns came out with yellow bags with cereal boxes to give away and the kids had to say the name of the circus. The cartoon characters were on the bag too.

The circus is advertising exclusively in the Spanish media so watch for them in your area. Pete said it is a beautiful show with air conditioning. They had the Cuneo elephants, the Loyal riding act, Batistas and the Espanas wheel act, among others. Please let us know if you go to see this fine show when it comes to your town. Thanks, Pete.

***Dick McGivney** sent photos, which I will have in the next issue, of the debut of **Clayton Rosaire**, performing with **Kay's** cats in Altoona. The Jaffa Shrine Circus there had the first circus parade in Altoona history since the late 30s. Kay and Clayton rode in the parade in a cage with their tiger.

Dick said Clayton did an excellent job of working the cats, with mom, Kay, standing on the outside of the cage. The Outback Steak House provided a free dinner for the performers, giving them anything they wanted. Dick also sent along a newspaper article with photos of Kay and her cats, **Tira**, a 3-year old Bengal and **Samson**, also 3, a white Bengal tiger, that I will have in the next issue. **Mozart** thinks Tira looks cute with her pink tongue sticking out! Dick said he hopes to get to the Detroit Zoo to see the newborn tiger cubs. Let us know, Dick.

***News from the Ringling home page: "Barnum's Birthday Bash July 5!"**-P.T. was born on that day in 1810 in Danbury, Ct. and the web site will expand their on-line email postcard offerings to include birthday cards! Their on-line store will have 20% off all day the 5th. Visit them at: www.ringling.com

Museum Raises First \$1 Million For Circus

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art announces that the Ringling Renaissance Steering Committee and staff have made significant progress toward matching Howard Tibbals' \$6.5 million challenge gift to build and endow a new wing to the Museum of the Circus, raising \$1.2 million in the last 6 months. With the \$1.3 million raised in the spring and fall of 1999 to complete funding needed for the restoration of Cà d'Zan, the total raised by Ringling Renaissance is now at \$2.5 million.

Museum Director Dr. Ebitz is pleased to announce that The William G. Selby and Marie Selby Foundation has approved a capping grant of \$300,000 for the Circus Museum expansion and Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Tate have pledged a naming gift for a gallery in the new Tibbals Wing.

For the second year, the Museum has raised \$100,000 in cash to match a Legislative appropriation restricted to an endowment to hire needed staff. This year the Legislature's challenge was met by gifts from the Board of Trustees, the Advisory Council, the Ringling Renaissance Steering Committee and Museum staff. These funds are allocated to augment the Circus Museum staff, making the funds eligible for the Tibbals match as well. The following Center Ring Stars who gave Standing Room Only talks at the Museum of the Circus during January through May 2000 were honored at a reception at the Ringling Museum of the Circus on May 25:

Margie Geiger, performer and teacher on the roman rings; Steve Smith, former Dean of the Clown College; Pedro Reis, Director of Circus Sarasota; Jeanette Williams, 8th generation circus performer, talent agent and importer/exporter of white tigers; Jackie LeClaire, a clown's clown who was (literally) born in the circus, Dolly Jacobs, Queen of the Air and Lou Jacobs' daughter and John Herriott, sought-after Ringmaster and equestrian. Many new exhibits are currently on view in the Museum of the Circus, including some on loan from the current Ringling Bros. Circus. Also on

view is an exact miniature replica of the Circus Advertising Car, one of 55 train cars in Mr. Tibbals' 3,000 square foot model of the Ringling Bros. Circus in the early 1930s.

News From Our Friends

***Sheelagh Jones'** daughter, **Sara**, was in the concession department on **Sterling-Reid** this summer and now has been promoted to office staff!

***Rich Deptula** writes that former Ringling Ringmaster, **Michael Gillette** is on Broadway in "Kiss Me Kate." Also, **Jim Simmons**, who was in the "Wizard of Oz" and "Lion King" has joined the Ringling band again, playing Keyboard.

***Maria Henneberry**, daughter of **Lee & Rita Henneberry**, was presented with the Crystal Award by the Bloomington/Normal chapter of the Assn. for Women in Communications. It is the chapter's highest honor given to a member who has shown leadership, dedication and excellence in the communications field and in the chapter. As bureau chief for WMBD TV, in Peoria, Maria is responsible for daily anchoring and reporting for all newscasts on WMBD and sister station WCIA. She is a graduate of Illinois State University, Normal, with a degree in broadcast journalism.

***Steve & Kathy Gossard** went to visit the **Big Apple Circus** in Chicago. "It was a wonderful show. **Bello Nock** was hilarious. The flying act was one of the best I have seen anywhere. The young flyer from Lithuania did a double twisting double somersault!" **Don Covington** took them back stage to meet Bello and the people in the flying act. Tell **Cheryl Jones** hello for me Don!

***Al House** writes "Beatty-Cole had a lot of mud coming from Northampton, Mass and ran into the Conn. state inspector in the next town of Enfield. He was tough! The show will play Long Island during the first weeks of August. The Felix Adler Tent of Paterson, NJ will host a luncheon for circus personnel at the Meadowlands Fair thru July 9. Feted first was **Ward Hall**, side show impresario on 6/27; **Khris Allen & Colleen Perkins** 6/28.

RUMBLINGS FROM THE CRUMMY

By Brian Nunn

I used to call it the "stand around and look at it stall." Pretty much anybody can figure out a way to put off what needs to be done for a while. BUT, if you've got animals, this luxury only works for a very, short time. Also, being with a show, the end result is, it's got to go up or it wouldn't go at all.

I learned how to hit a one or two inch iron stake with a 20 pound hammer, along with two or three other guys, working in team. I splice rope, tie knots, and baseball stitch canvas. I learned to work tough stock (except cats-I don't like 'em). (He does like the Valentine Pride!-Cherie). I learned to take care of the things that I worked with. I much prefer gentle type volunteering, livestock but it's not real exciting. No matter what you like, chances are you're going to have, many times, things that don't work out your way.

I had the Garbage joint (novelty stand) working for Big John Walker, when one night, during teardown, Big John took a look inside the tent and told me I had more stalls than a liberty stable. Scooter, working the inside grab joint (food) said over to me, "That must be where they keep the Liberty horses."

I like the Walkers a lot. They always had good people around them because they treated them well. Actually, real well-only the good die young, as they say.

*I prefer a double rolling half hitch but the European style hitch comes off easier if the guys are wet and tight. So, there you go.

*As far as animal trainers go, as the one I respect most said, "Hey, if what you're doing works, you're doing it right." Also, saying nobody gets hurt. I liked riding horses, elephants and the like (never rode a camel). I had a lot of fun. Some of the work was wearing, but the end result was good. My only regrets are my own failings, the Circus was very, very good to me.

*On a large truck, the Jake brake works off of compression (a wonderful invention). With a three

speed Jake, it works with either 2, 4 or 6 cylinders. The electric switch on the dash controls this. Also, the Peterbilt wrecker I spoke of was old. It had 3 manual shift handles. The one in the middle was a 6 speed, just to the right of it was a 4 speed and next to that (which you have to reach for, long arms help) is a two speed.

Therefore, all together, you've got 24 speeds. Granted, you're pretty busy working all these gears, but that's the way they used to build them (tough). You can't really use all these gears from stop to highway speed (like a sports car). It's just a tool and great advantage to have all those selections at speed, going up a grade with a 85,000 pound truck, with your big wrecker weighing about 60,000 or better. All that and a brand new 400 horse Caterpillar engine, "1986."

News From The Ringling Home Page

"Most of you who have written have been requesting an update regarding HR2929. Those who spoke against the bill included veterinarians and experienced elephant trainers, managers and handlers. They presented evidence that performing elephants are more physically fit and more socially adjusted than many of their more sedentary counterparts in zoos. This fact is demonstrated by the higher birth and survival rates of elephant calves born in circus breeding programs, such as the very successful program at Ringling Bros. Center for Elephant Conservation. They also refuted the bill proponents' allegations that elephants in circuses and rides present a public safety threat-in fact, the circus remains a wholesome and safe form of family entertainment. As of June 26, this legislation remains under consideration by the House Judiciary Committee, which has taken no further action on the legislation beyond holding hearings. When there is any additional news to report, we will let you know. Additional information about HR2929 is available at: www.ringling.com/bandwagon." You can subscribe to Ringling's e-mail newsletter at: www.ringling.com.

JOINING CFA TENTS

By Cherie

I belong to a few Tents and love receiving their newsletters. I just joined one that I have to tell you about! The Jeanette Williams Tent.

Was I surprised when a package from Tent President, Rich Deptula arrived. Inside was a big folder with beautiful art work on the cover and "German National Circus Williams Althoff, Inc." at the top. Inside, I found treasures! Not only was there a membership card with my name on it, again full of art work, but also Tent stationary and envelope, with the same golden art work and a beautiful membership certificate with the art work at top, surrounded by lavender scroll work, and signed by Jeanette herself. The art work was done by George DaDeppo.

Also enclosed was 2 brochures about Circus Williams Althoff and in the center was family photos of 8 generations of circus families, including Carola Althoff Williams, 1903, with a similar photo of Caroline next to it. But, that wasn't all! Also included in the packet was a close up color 8x10 of Jeanette and a beautiful white tiger and signed by Jeanette! I was so excited, I had to call Rich and thank him. Mozart was really thrilled to see the tiger! If you would like to join Jeanette's Tent, send \$10 to Rich Deptula, 2704 Marshall Ave., Lorain, OH 44052 and tell him Mozart sent you! Jeanette writes her own newsletters, too. If you have a Tent or Ring you would like me to join, please write.

Elephant to Cross the Alps For Love

An African elephant in his prime who has been pining in the Rome Zoo since his mate died 9 years ago, is about to find a new romantic interest across the Alps! Calimero, 20, spent 9 years with Carla and she died in 1991 and Calimero has missed her since then. He has 3 "ladies" waiting for him in Basle, Switzerland. Zoo officials said he would make the journey by road, although not on foot, like Hannibal.

The James E. Strates Web Site

You can learn about the history of the James E. Strates Shows by visiting their web site www.strates.com. It has a lot of old photos, plus their routes, a "what's new" section, posters, their newsletter and even employment. The history part starts out with James E. Strates in 1909, at the age of 15. I will have more on this site in the next issue, so please take a look now and enjoy!

PASSING OF OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS

James Howell, 65, father of **T.J. Howell**, passed away June 1 in Ottumwa, Iowa. He was born March 25, 1935 in Louisville, Ky, son of Earl and Mary Lowrey Howell. He worked for **Polack Bros. Circus** in the early 50s, working with **Jack Joyce** and **Klauser's** bears. He later married T.J.'s mother, who was from Denmark and performed a high act. In the 70s, James worked on **King Bros. Circus** and **Hoxie Bros. Circus** in concessions, front end and other jobs. He worked advance for **Carson and Barnes Circus** in the early 80s for 5-7 years. He retired, but went back to work for **Dave Hale's 5-H Ranch** with pig races and helped out at the **Circus World Museum** too. Cards can be sent to T.J. at: 922 Water St., Baraboo, WI 53913.

CIRCUS NEWS

The **USDA** reports June 9, they recently charged **Manuel Ramos**, doing business as the **Oscarian Brothers Circus**, in Riverview, FL, with violations of the **Animal Welfare Act**. "We believe that Ramos' failure to properly restrain an elephant contributed to a woman's death," said **W. Ron DeHaven**, deputy administrator for animal care with **APHIS**. "Our regulations exist for a reason. If they are not followed, there can be a risk to the animals we protect and to people." Investigators found that Ramos failed to contain an elephant by failing to provide and maintain an enclosure of sufficient strength and in good repair, which resulted in the elephant attacking and killing a woman. Ramos also failed in having camels and zebras examined and included in the required program of

**From "Black Bras Don't Show The Dirt!
Or Life On A Mud Show"**

By Bunni Bartok Perz

I thought I would show you another of Bunni's poems so you could see what a great book this is. Bunni's center pages drawing is worth the price alone! I found one that really brings back memories for me. Hope you like it.

"I Think We Blew The Arrows, Custer!"

On every carnival and every mudshow, the "24 hour man" puts up arrow signs so we know which way to go. They say each show's arrows are different, so you can't get confused.

Famous last words! I'm not amused! Who can ever forget that infamous day? A 200 mile jump and we were well on the way. From Southern New Jersey to Long Island's North Shore. Beautiful weather-who could ask for more?

As we traveled the "pike" we should have been warned, when we saw many arrows partially torn. A little farther up the road, we passed other circus trucks. Some being towed. Arrows from other shows were seen that day. Like Hoxie, Beatty-Cole, King and Sells-Gray.

All seemed headed in the same direction. Straight to the New Jersey-Manhattan connection! After hours of following wrong arrows "to hell and back," it looked like we were finally on the right track. Soon we came upon 50 circus trucks all in a row, trying to figure out which way to go?

We were on the lower east side like a blind caravan. Mentally cursing every 24 hour man! Trucks backing up-going this way and that. Twenty ran out of gas! 10 each had a flat. It was like being in a giant maze, totally paved. Suddenly in the distance-An Arrow! We're saved!

We followed the arrow down a small back alley-and there on a pole, stapled by some evil Svengali, were 5 different show arrows forming a star! Then, I 'woke from my nightmare as Janek drove on the lot, saying, "Here we are!" Thank God!

(I can remember years ago on the Beatty show, in the middle of the night-around Baltimore, I believe,

trying to figure out which way to go. There were other performer's trucks and trailers on ramps, pulled over and passing us-all LOST! Another time, someone HAD taken down arrows and put them up so they led to a farm road! I imagine they were hiding in a near-by field laughing. Not funny in the middle of the night when you haven't had any sleep! So, if you'd like to read about circus history and see Bunni's drawings that accompany the poems, please send \$5 plus \$1.50 postage to Bunni Bartok Perz, 144 East Rd., Sarasota, FL 34240. Florida residents, please add sales tax. This is still the 1984 price!

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CIRCUS NEWS

Maria Carrillo, founder of the **Flying Trapeze Assn. and Circus Arts & Acrobatics**, writes, "Our Second Circus Arts Professional Program is off and running. This session we welcome back Yumi Unezaki who joined us from Osaka, Japan and who had decided to pursue a career as a trapeze flyer. We also welcome Laura Witwer who has been performing in Cirque Le Masque in Venezuela and Ben Mendoza from Orange County. Both are starting their professional careers with CAPP classes in trampoline, acrobatics, static trapeze, flying trapeze, equilibristics and conditioning. They have also been very helpful at our recent children's event where Circus Arts and Acrobatics taught circus classes to 200 kids at a community summer camp. Our next session begins August 14 and runs until October 23. A \$1000 non-refundable deposit to secure apartment space is due by July 15. This program is becoming very popular and we are expecting quite a few new students in August, so contact us early to reserve a spot." You can contact Maria at 1-877-Circkus or FAX at 916-788-0233 or visit their site at: www.CircusArtsInc.com.

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***Dave Gruesz** attended the **Circus Model Builders Convention** in Boise and had a great time. He met **Don Cash**, who's father was on the clown staff for the 1935-36 **Al G. Barnes Circus**. Dave is trying to create some of the clowns for his new display.

A PAWS FROM MOZART

By Mozart Valentine

MEOW everyone, welcome back to my column. Mom told me about her great visit to Circus Pages and all the felines they had! Maybe next year I can go along, as I know they will be back with all the fantastic business they do here in Bloomington! I hate to brag, but I'm the largest of the Valentine Pride and I would really like to meet Simba!

The London paper has a sad tale (or tail) to tell: Police are looking for a burglar who stole a rare and valuable cat, Toni. The cat was reported stolen June 5th. Police have warned all ports and Interpol has been alerted.

Antonio B. Pinardan, a 2-year-old Ankara Turkish Angora, commands a stud fee of \$1200! His owner, Peter Collins, paid \$1500 for the cat 18 months ago. But since then, exports have been restricted and another cat of the breed was sold last year for \$375,000. (Yes, I have the zeros in the right place!) Collins said he saw the thief who got away carrying the cat in a bag. "I chased her and saw her getting into an estate car with foreign plates that had its engine running." Police feared that there might be an attempt to take the cat out of the country. Now, I would really like to meet this cat! This could be the next "Fancy Feast" cat. Let's us know **Lloyd** if you meet one of these cats in the alley!

Mom is up for a new job at Illinois State University next week, but she saw an ad for a job at our **Miller Park Zoo**, which she is going to apply for! I hope she gets that one. The Zoo will begin construction soon for the new Children's Zoo. They are also fixing up the sun bear exhibit this summer. It is really neat that my vet, **Matt Fraker**, is also the Zoo's vet, so I know we get the very best care.

Some sad news from Boston. "**Major**" the **Stone Zoo** polar bear was euthanized June 3 at age 33, after Zoo officials discovered he was suffering from advanced stages of liver cancer and nothing could be done to restore his health. He had been at the Zoo since 1975. In honor of Major, the zoo will be erecting a temporary memorial wall where

people can post remembrances. "Massachusetts has lost a dear friend, as well as an ambassador for wildlife," said Brian Rutledge, CEO of Zoo New England. "Major's life touched thousands, if not millions, of people across the region and we are saddened by his death."

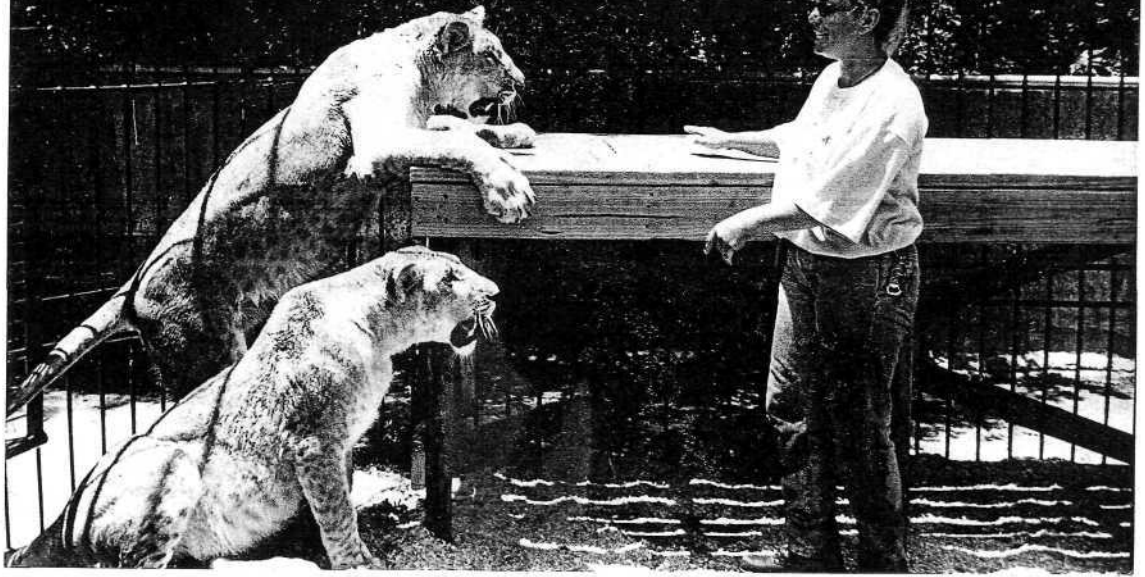
From the L.A. Zoo: Several veterinarians performed tubal ligation on 14-year-old chimpanzee, **Joanna**, to prevent her from getting pregnant. Joanna did not take her birth control pills regularly and she is diabetic. "It would be dangerous for her health if she got pregnant." This is the first time that a tubal ligation has been performed at the L.A. Zoo. Although all breeding age male chimps at the Zoo have been vasectomized, there is one chimp whose vasectomy failed. Shaun, 11, is the father of baby chimps Jean, 13 months old and Jake, 12 months old. They were both surprise babies because keepers did not expect the females to get pregnant! Since the surprise births, the Zoo's 7 female chimps have been taking birth control pills that their keepers crush and mix in their food. Joanna is the only chimp that has been reluctant to take the pills regularly.

Debbie Olson, of the **Indianapolis Zoo**, was in Washington for the HR2929 hearings. She said, "Individuals with little to no experience or knowledge of elephants or elephant management are attempting to put a halt to public interaction with elephants." Debbie said that 10 foot, 7000 pound elephants can "keep in shape" by giving rides, which the Zoo eliminated early this spring. The Zoo's elephant, **Kubwa**, stayed physically fit early in her 22-month pregnancy by giving rides and performing tricks that backers of the bill oppose. Debbie, who has worked with elephants for more than 20 years and is editor of the Journal of the Elephant Managers Assn., said cases of mistreatment are rare and isolated. She said the most recent reports occurred in 1992.

Visit **Kari and Gary Johnson's** web page, filled with many photos. at www.havetrunkwilltravel.com and see for yourself! Let me hear from you.

MEOW FOR NOW, MOZART.

Loli + Simba With Tammy



Wally Eastwood
Eileen, Freida & Lillian Logan

• JUN • 67



Ruby Woods 1936
Yankee Patterson Circus

Tammy Wallenda With Lobi



Reading about Jungle Land Zoo

**Back Yard
1522 Clinton Blvd.
Bloomington, IL 61701**