

BACK YARD

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DEFYING DEATH ON HIGH WIRE

Wire Perilous, But It's Her Destiny

(NY Times, April 8, 1955-Valentine Archives)

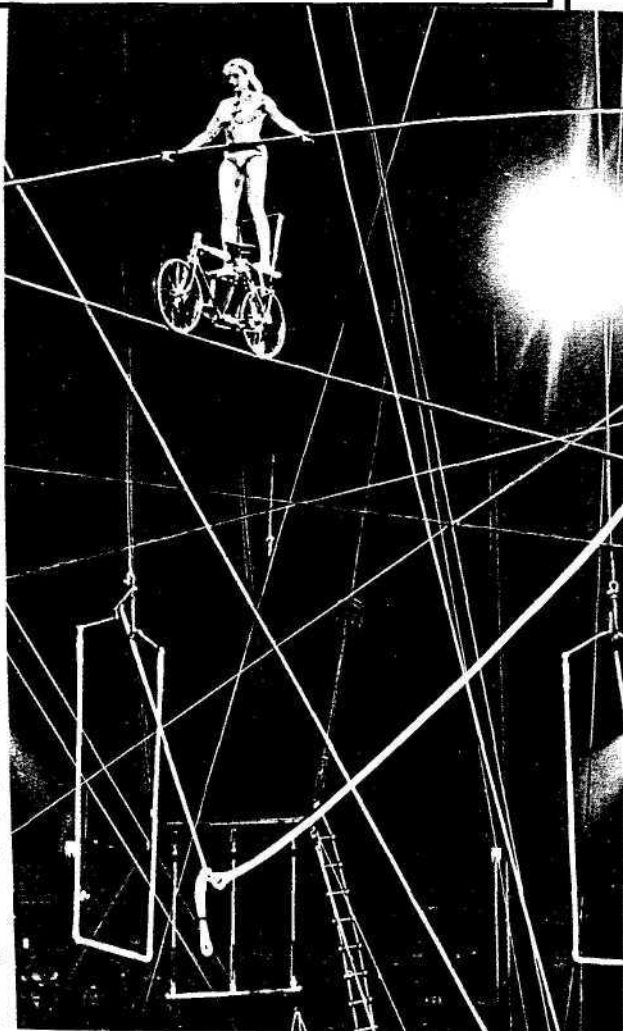
This is the time of year when little girls home from the circus dream of growing up to become glamorous stars in spangles & tights, performing feats of daring while crowds applaud. It is a symptom of spring that mothers recognize without alarm, having once been little girls themselves.

So dreamed Josephine Berosini, when she was a little girl. Today, at 29, she is billed as "Queen of the High Wire" at the Ringling Circus in Madison Square Garden. It is most unlikely, however, that Josephine's rise to the pinnacle of circusdom can in any way be duplicated by any of the starry-eyed little girls viewing her at the Garden these days. Josephine's career as a high-wire artist might almost be said to have started before she was born. 5 generations of Berosinis developed the art her father passed on to her.

She crossed a wire high in a circus tent for the first time when she was 5 years old-on her father's shoulders. He lay down on the wire & little Josephine did a head stand on his chest. This was in Czechoslovakia, where the Berosinis originated.

At 6, Josephine walked the high wire alone. She fell, during a rehearsal shortly afterward, & papa made her go back up & walk the wire 10 times "so the fear wouldn't get in me," she said. At 7, the young wire artist fell during a performance in Copenhagen. "Fortunately, there was a net," she said.

"It was not because of my footing," she adds proudly, "but I was so tiny & fragile the wind blew me off balance." Josephine runs, dances & walks blindfold across a wire high in the Garden. She also rides a bicycle across it-standing up. And she is the only woman in the world who walks up & down a wire stretched at a 45 degree angle from the floor to a height of 50 feet. "It's a fake, she'll never fall, she knows her business," cynics



sometimes comment when the performer occasionally stumbles & regains her balance during her perilous passage along the wire.

(Continued on Page 5)



Thanks to Mary Jane Miller

Mid 1940s

Ringling in Madison Square Gardens



Curley
Clyde Beatty Circus
1948

Mills Bros.
1964

From Bottom Up
Yettie Grotefent Wallenda
Dolly Copeland
Martha Wallenda Henderson
Madeline Kreis
Lee Wallenda
Kitty Clark
Herman & Karl
Valerie Antalek, Left
Mary Jane Miller, Right



THE FOX !!



(Jenny's computers and printer are fighting each other so she hasn't been able to send out her newsletter! She called me on the 5th to send along some news from Sarasota. Hopefully, she will be able to write us soon with news of the reunions, especially the Ringling one. I would like to know who all came for this one. Good Luck, Jenny!)

*On Jan. 4, Al Pilz's son, Wayne, was involved in a car accident. He was on his way to Garden Winter Quarters. The car rolled over & over, landing on top of him. He is in the hospital and hope we will have an update on him next time.

*January 23 will be the Ring of Fame Ceremonies at St. Armands Circle. Jenny was asked to prepare the food again. She said she will make potato salad, macaroni salad, deviled eggs, cheesecake, trays with cheeses, roast beef, turkey, ham and salami. All the trays are home-made by Jenny-although they may look store-bought!!

*Reid Bros. Circus opens Jan. 16 in Albany, GA for 2 days, at the Civic Center. Then they go to Montgomery. Paul Horsman reports they will be in Utica, NY on Feb. 15.

*Tammy Wallenda will be working her cat act. She has added some new cats to the act. Since Sept. 9, Jenny has been teaching web to the girls for Dick Garden.

Jenny has heard the new Ringling show is very nice. The wardrobe is just brilliant. She reports there are 3 rings of elephants; Cindy & Roy Wells, Cathy Hanneford & Mark Oliver, Gunther's son.

*Jenny had promised to make Brunch at the Club, so on Dec. 27, she, Norma and Cha Cha fixed a great banquet! They served Mexican eggs, refried beans, cheese omelets, home fries, scrambled eggs, bacon and sausage! What a great menu.

*On Jan. 9, there was a memorial for Angela, sister of Janosh and Harry Dubsy. Jenny will have more about this in her next newsletter. I know we all look forward to Jenny's newsletter real soon.

BACK YARD GOSSIP

Rumor has it that Kay Rosaire's cats will be on the UniverSoul Circus...Coco will be on Kelly-Miller, along with Barry DeChant...Cathy Hanneford "sings" to her horses on the new Ringling show.

COURTSHIP OF A CLOWN

By *Bill Ballantine Part IV*
(From *Holiday Magazine* * July, 1950)

June 24, New Bedford, MA—Took Whiskers for a little walk into town after the night show, then sat on the tracks together until the train pulled out. She wouldn't tell me why she cried tonight.

June 25, Lowell, MA—I'm going to marry Roberta Whiskers Ouisqui Light! I asked her what she would say if I asked her to marry me & then she said would you, oh would you, and I did. We were sitting by the tracks down by the stock cars watching the loading. We lay back in the long grass to see the stars, & big gray shapes of elephants blotted out the moon. We could hear their little feminine squeaks of protest as they settled down for the night. Across the tracks the horses were trampling about, kicking the sides of their cars. From down at the runs came the chug-chug of trucks & tractors loading the flats. Tonight I felt it was our Circus & our flats-ours alone. I'm back in my upper now, feeling a little giddy.

June 26, Fitchburg, MA—Good omen for my engagement. Since it was past midnight, that made it the 26th, same date as my birthday, also Roberta's age, & 6 and 2 is eight, the number of August, my birth month. We're all set. Haven't told anybody yet. Rose & Paulette were upset today because their friend Madame La Grange, the French aerial star, was slugged by Alberty the perch-pole act. He was hauled off to the local cooler.

June 27, Bangor, ME—Our cat is out! Whiskers couldn't hold her secret, told "only 2 girls" in her dressing room which means the whole lot will have the news by morning, even allowing for backward communications of the Sunday off. Took her to the movies tonight & for coffee.

July 2, Springfield, MA—Here for a 2-day stand & it's mighty hot. A new boy who just joined out in Props was found murdered down by the trains tonight. Delayed train departure some. Murderer turned out to be a new Circus hand also.

July 5, Albany, NY—Cookhouse was decorated with flags & bunting to celebrate the Fourth, traditional circus style. We had turkey & ice cream, too. Buddy North put up prize money for games in the Big Top between shows. Whiskers & I liked the stake-driving contest the best. In the web-climbing for prop hands, the winner made it to the top of the flying rigging in 16 seconds. Fireworks tonight down by the cars. Buddy North's butler set them off.

(Continued on Page 6)

KEEP ON TRUCKING

By Mike Cecere

A huge semi truck roars by you on the Interstate & you think right away, it's some tobacco chewing, cowboy hat wearing, waitress romancing cowboy boot wearing yehaw from Black Oak, Arkansas.

And in some cases, you'd be right. But out there somewhere is circus legend, Bobby Gibbs. Just about anyone connected with animals & circuses knows Bobby Gibbs. Some of us lucky enough to have worked with him over the years know him as a guy with a heart as big as his girth, with a hearty laugh & love of life and all God's creatures. He's been lucky enough to have been married to Rosa, the love of his life and have her as a partner in life.

I don't have to tell you if you know them. They are as perfect a couple as you'd ever meet despite working with some of the wildest & wacky circus owners in the industry. Bobby has never let any of life's tribulations get him down, slicing negative events down to size with his razor sharp wit and sense of humor.

He's worked with some of the biggest & some of the smallest outfits all over North America & has a wealth of tales from them all.

I recall visiting the Miller-Johnson Circus in 1973 and watching him unload a veritable Noah's Ark out of his trailers. He had elephants, llamas, camels, ponies, mules, dogs, bears, birds and who knows what else in the show. That was Cliff Vargas' earlier show before buying all his own elephants & horses & it was quite a deal. Pat Anthony had his huge cage act, the Oscar Cristiani elephants, as well as veteran Wally Ross was there with 5 ~~V~~ owned elephants.

He also played all the major Shrine dates & was very popular with the Fez-wearing Tribe. Along the way, during a million miles cross country multiple times, he became a great truck driver.

And with the unwillingness of many circus owners and producers to pay reasonable wages & modern operations, such as trucking companies willing to pay for experienced CDL drivers, it was natural for Bobby to put his experience to work. He & Rosa remain available as advisors to many animal acts and Bobby tries to visit his many friends nationwide on shows or in zoos as his schedule permits. So, instead of "The show must go on," his new motto is "Keep on trucking." So when that semi breezes by you next time on the highway, make way. It could be Bobby Gibbs!!

Patricia Zerbin, Germany, reports Circus Krone opened their first winter program Dec. 25, running until Jan. 31. Their new program is in Feb. & March, opening the season April 1st, touring not only Germany this year, but also Austria. This will be the 6th season for this program & in 2000 the show will open with a new program. Circus Krone will be moving all animals this year by truck. They have decided to stop using the train. The equipment will still go by rail when the jumps are far, but the elephants & horses that have always gone by train will no longer.

They had a fire at Winter Quarters Jan. 7th. They lost 3 house trailers. No one was injured, but the loss of 2 dogs belonging to the clown Pierino. The fire was started by an employee that had joined during the year. It was then discovered that he had been in jail for starting fires! Needless to say, he is back in jail. Damage estimated at 190,000.00DM.

They are also looking into the purchase of 5 Asian elephants. If this comes to pass, it will give the show 15 elephants & if Patricia's elephants are finally able to join, it will give them a herd of 18 elephants, 15 Asians & 3 Africans. It will also be the largest herd of elephants traveling with a circus in the world. Thanks, Patti.

Bobby Hakes, Sarasota, reports that 265 people came to the New Years Eve party at the Showfolks Club. A partial list includes June & Harry Mills (June is Pres. of the Club); Kathie & Paul Nelson; Julie & Mariso Drogue; the Sloans: Shelagh, Barrie, King & wife, Luanne; the Scotts: George, Pom Pom, Vivian, Tina; the Rosaries: Derrick, Pam, Linda, Iver; the Herriotts: Mary Ruth, John; the Nocks: Orgie, Helen; Freddie Logan; Jim Ridenour; Bobby Wyman; Eric Bauram; Jeanette Williams; Evie Altoff; Lucie Toth with fiancé Pete; Pete Cristiani; Norma Davenport; Anne Demonte; Bunny Pratt; Monia Kaiser & sister, Stanicka; Bobby & Phips Hakes; Donna McMahon; Duke Vinson; Frank & Ruthie Clark. The circus owners there were: Ian, Mickey, young Ian & Dick Garden; Heidi & Harry Dubskys; Patti Gatti; Arlene & Ron Morris; Henry Bush; Doris Earl & Ray McMahon. Also, Dale Riker, past CFA Pres. Jackie LeClaire performed some old Red Skelton skits & they were very funny. Mike Austin lead the band for dance music. There were all the families of the above mentioned, plus 3-4 generations of children. A good time was had by all and don't we all wish we could have been there!! Thanks, Bobby.

DEFYING DEATH ON HIGH WIRE....

She does, indeed, know her business. But so did her uncle & aunt, who fell to their deaths in Europe while performing on a high wire. So, too, did her uncle Ludwig, who spent 4 years in a hospital & has not yet recovered fully from a fall in Buffalo in 1939. And so did her beloved brother, Otto, who died in a fall in Waco, TX in 1950, when he was 23.

Before Otto's death, the Berosini performance was a family act-Papa, Mamma, Josephine & Otto. It included a new member, a girl from Birmingham, AL, whom Otto was engaged to marry. After Otto's tragic death "we all gave up," Josephine explained. "It just seemed there ought to be some other way of making a living."

Papa & mamma are still in retirement, down in Florida. Otto's fiancée abandoned the high wire & took up bareback riding. But Josephine decided her brother would want her to carry on the family tradition, & she returned to the wire. She described her return.

"It was 2 months after his death. At the Ohio State Fair. When I first came into the ring & looked at the wire, I thought of my brother & said to myself, "I just can't do it. But I did it. I used his pole & his other equipment, & I am still using it. It's getting kind of worn, & in this business everything has to be perfect mechanically, so I should replace it. But I am sentimental about it because it was his." She shrugged her shoulders. "I never think about death when I'm up there. I don't dare. After all, I'm just a human being."

Underneath her, moving step by step on the ground with her every step in the air, is a handsome, mustached dark-haired man, unobtrusively clad in a circus uniform. He is Josephine's husband, Alexander Konyot & a circus star himself. During his own act, Konyot is the rider who takes the center ring for an exhibition of fancy horseback riding. But in his wife's act, he plays the unannounced role of "human net."

When she is safe on the sawdust once more, his face is dripping with perspiration & so is hers. "I don't like it, feeling my heart freeze twice a day, but there's nothing I can do about it. The high wire is Josephine's destiny, & there is where she has to be," said Konyot.

"Alex is there to break my fall if anything happens. I can't see him-for I must keep my eyes fixed 6 or 8 feet ahead on the wire-but I know his is there," Josephine said. Until the circus stars were married 2 years ago, her father walked under her. Her parents now live in Miami & have a very big yard with both a high wire & horse

ring, so Josephine & Alex can practice between seasons. When not at home in Miami, she keeps house in a railroad compartment. She prefers housekeeping the 4 off-season months in a home that stands still, & is looking forward to eventual retirement & raising a family. She won't raise her future children as high-wire artists, however, explaining, "There will be no more Berosinis on the high wire-not only because of my brother's death, but because I have seen my mother's face as she watched her children perform. It is more strain for a mother to watch than for the child to learn."

"Blondin Descendant Keeps Courage High"-From Christian Science Monitor-1955 (From ISU Archives)

Josephine, great-great-granddaughter of the celebrated Charles Blondin, who 3 times crossed Niagara's whirling waters on a tightrope, emulates her famous paternal ancestor in almost unbelievable exhibitions.

With only a crimson ostrich feather fan for balance, she walks straight up an "angle wire" to her rigging 50 feet above the ground. Holding a rhinestone-covered long balancing pole, she lies down on her back, regains her position, kicks both the front & back of her head, dances a superbly graceful tango & samba, moving both forward & backward, sits down, & finally stands for several seconds, with one foot raised high above her head.

Next, she rides a small bicycle across the high wire, balances herself on top of a tiny metal chair, which in turn she balances on the bicycle before riding backward to her perch. Then she clothes herself from head to foot in a spangled black cotton cover-all resembling those worn by mechanics which she made herself to mask her face completely. She can see only a blurred general outline of the lights in front of her.

As far as she knows, she is the only person in the world to perform either the samba or any other dance on the high wire. Whenever she can avoid it, Josephine prefers not to give an interview just before her performance. She has found that when she tries to describe the work, which she does to someone who talks of it as extremely hazardous, its dangers seem to become more apparent to her.

"Like any job, there are times, too, that some parts of it don't particularly appeal. It's much more difficult for me to work under canvas on a very windy day. I work directly under the top of the tent & when it blows with a big wind, it distracts me when I need to keep my thought on balancing. (Continued on Page 7)

"COURTSHIP OF A CLOWN".....

July 6, Utica, NY—Ballet broads are taking up earrings & there is lots of cork-and-needle piercing in the dressing rooms. A stern notice in 3 languages, signed by the Big Boss, suggesting that some of the foreign acts mend their slovenly ways & conduct themselves more like ladies & gentlemen, was pinned up on the Wardrobe top sidewall. Roberta says Elkhorn already has a wife back in Miss.

July 9, Tonawanda, NY—Last stand before we head west & take-off point for discouraged First-of-Mays. Whiskers said she would have left too if she hadn't met me.

July 12, Cleveland, OH—Home of the best penny arcade in America. It's near the lot so I took Whiskers & had our engagement picture taken by Photomatic. We've set our wedding date for Sept. when the show plays the coast, at Whisker's home in San Bernardino.

July 13, Cleveland—Whiskers gave me a dusty old copy of *Innocents Abroad*. The girls are going to give Lola a baby shower. 107 miles tonight for 2 days in Toledo.

July 16, Detroit, MI—Alzanas worked together as an act in Toledo, first time since they fell last year. Rain here this a.m. We're set up near Dearborn for just one stand, not moving to the other side of the city as in previous years. Biz is pretty good.

July 19, Flint, MI—Plagued today by a visit from a last-season's girl friend. Elkhorn blew the show last night. Rose & Paulette weeping after a practice session with their Chinese aunts. No cinch to be an apprentice contortionist. Decided last night to have a wedding ring made the shape of a hairpin. Sent design to Harve in NY to have it made up & also asked him to be my best man.

July 27, Madison, WI—In butter country now & there are oleo notices up in the cookhouse, as if we didn't know it's not butter we get.

July 28, La Crosse, WI—Nice lot situated near some mountains. Lots of pots & kettles steaming beside the tracks at night down by the cars as the foreign-family acts fix after-show suppers gypsy style.

July 29, Minneapolis—Our 2 lady clowns, Rose Hanlon & Lulu, went shopping in Skid Row this a.m. for a new trombone to use in one of Rose's gags. Rose felt the old one wasn't pulling her pants up & down fast enough, but this clowning fine point was difficult to get across to the startled pawnbrokers. Whiskers bravely took an old college girl friend to cookhouse tonight. There was a high wind & electrical storm at 7 tonight. Had the Big

Top creaking but it held. Over in 30 min. but left the lot muddy mess.

August 5, Des Moines—Alfalfa instead of straw in the center ring today. Pete, who drives Whiskers in Manege, told her one of the grooms had his finger bitten off in a fight. She was very quiet tonight because she had seen Carmelita, one of the Italian girls, packing a box for overseas & softly weeping as she lovingly fondled each item. Buzzy Potts has turned up with a new comedy fur coat. Price was too high, & Buzzy asked the man if he couldn't cut it. So, the fur man cut the coat in half & sold Buzzy the top part half-price.

Aug. 7, Lincoln, NE—Girls in Whiskers' dressing room were surprised into their bath towels just after matinee by a minister crawling in from the Big Top. Said he was looking for the keys to the vicarage that he'd dropped from the seats. Dreamy Eyes found them for him. Last of our 1-day stands for a while. Have a Sunday enroute tomorrow, 2 days in K.C., then on to the real west.

Aug. 10, Kansas City—Lola closed her season & headed back East to have her baby. Whiskers took me around to see the new hackney stud in the horse top.

Aug. 11, en route—Up talking to Whiskers in 62 car & had to run back to my car, almost the length of the train, when it started of suddenly. When we stopped tonight near the second section, I saw the Hungarian dog-act lady going down the track with her flashlight looking for their wagon on the flats. On these long runs, her husband stays with their 26 dogs in the wagon.

Aug. 12, Denver—Tried on my wedding suit in the dressing room just before matinee. Every prop & groom knew its cut & color before Spec time. Finally got up enough nerve to write Whiskers' mother & father. Got this briefing on the family from her. Her father practices law & buys up neglected pieces of desert & mountain just for the fun of it. He's an only son & his mother was a school supt. in buckboard days out in Montana. Whiskers' mother paints watercolors, has 3 brothers—a doctor, a plasterer & a potter. Her father, a Scotch retired mining engineer, once owned a gold mine & knows where there is a rich deposit of uranium. Here's hoping they believe in clowns.

Aug. 13, Denver—Between shows sat out back with Whiskers, watching thunderheads over the mountains. Ugo Bogino, the Italian acrobat, went to see Buffalo Bill's Grave.

Aug. 17, Ogden, UT—Division point of 5 railroads & home for lots of Pullman porters.

(Continued on Page 9)

"Berosini Keeps Courage High".....

"What do I think about when I work blindfolded on the wire? I shut out every single thought except perfecting my job. I know my safety depends on it. It was much easier when I worked with my father & brother. When one of us made a misstep, someone would say, 'Move a little to the right or to the left.' As a solo, my act covers 11 minutes of strenuous work. That is why I use a balancing pole to let me rest & slow up a little." The pole she carries weighs 30 pounds, inclusive of the aluminum weights at each end. Miss Berosini also likes to sew. She makes all of the beautifully spangled costumes she wears on the high wire. "I love to make them," she said. On the subject of self-disciplines, she knows all the rules. "My husband & I enjoy an occasional good movie, but since our work demands utmost fitness, we don't keep late hours. We know that we alone suffer if we relax our discipline. We much prefer family life to late parties." Before she came to America, she had 2 ambitions. The first was fulfilled when she became a citizen of the U.S. in 1952. The second, to repeat her illustrious ancestor's feat at Niagara Falls, has yet to be achieved. She has applied several times for permission, which, so far, Canadian Government officials have refused.

TEX COPELAND REMEMBERED

By Richard King

Awhile back, Tex Copeland died; the strange thing about being in this business is that if you don't hear something within 48 hours, everybody thinks you know & doesn't tell you. After Tex died, I didn't hear about it until the White Tops came out. Since that time I've been thinking about something to write about Tex, so here goes.

The story starts with me having breakfast at the showgrounds at the Great Circus Parade cookhouse with Doc Henderson, the Ringling vet. We were discussing the model of the wagon Doc used on the Ringling show in 1955, that I had built when a group of people came in. Breakfast never drew a big house as most people preferred to get the extra sleep, so when anyone came in you noticed. I knew I had seen them around but didn't know any of them by name. (I believe it was Tex, his wife Anne, Johnny Merrietta & a couple of others.)

The Doc said, "See that old guy in the middle? Go tell him you heard he's an expert on camels-he'll be impressed you heard about him." I had just come off the road where I had been clowning & I knew when I was being set up, but I liked the Doc & decided to go along

with his joke. Besides, I wanted to see the payoff. So, I got up & went over to the man Doc had pointed out & said, "I hear you're an expert on camels." Tex said, "Where did you hear that?" I pointed at the Doc, who was laughing so hard he almost fell out of his chair. Tex said, "That old so and so as been telling that story on me for years. No, I'm not a camel expert." I walked back to my table knowing I'd been part of an old joke but still not knowing the joke. I sat down & said, "OK, Doc. You want to tell me what that was all about?" Doc explained the story was in his book. It had been years since I read it, so Doc explained it to me.

One season at RBBB, Doc had to give an injection to a camel & he needed a helper to keep the camel from turning around & biting him. Tex was walking by & Doc asked him to help. Tex said he didn't know what to do & Doc said just grab him around the neck & hold on so he doesn't bite me. Tex said he could handle that and they went to work. The camel didn't bite Doc but he did decide to empty his stomach all over Tex! Tex suddenly found himself covered with a green burning acidic bile, but he held on until Doc finished & then stayed away from camels. The story then jumps ahead a few years & I was working at Circus World Museum when I heard a voice behind me say, "You taking good care of those camels?" I turned around & Tex was standing behind me. Doc Henderson had died a year or so before & now the camel joke was between Tex and me. The next year, we had some camels that walked really slow & were a pain to lead in the museum parade and it was my job to lead them.

I saw Tex on the grounds, walked up and said, "We're short handed & could use a hand. How about leading the camels in the parade?" Tex begged off, but the game was on and continued for years with the first one to see the other making the camel joke. It became our way of saying hello. The joke is over now, but it's been shared, so it lives on. So long, Tex, see you down the road. I'll be bringing you the camels to lead in the parade!

Al House, Oakland, NJ reports 12/27-Cedar Rapids, IA: There is a story of the renovation of the Hotel Patee of Perry, IA, the hometown of former circus agent R.M. Harvey. A local woman redid the 1913 built hotel into a very nice place, spending more than \$10 million! One room has a bed with a canopy shaped like a circus tent. Another room has a bed headboard made from a xylophone, saxophone & flutes, in tribute to the local high school band! Thanks, Al

128TH EDITION RINGLING BLUE UNIT:
 Jacksonville, FL-Coliseum-1/14-1/18
 N. Charleston, SC-Coliseum-1/21-1/24
 Macon, GA-Centreplex-1/28-1/31
 Augusta, GA-Civic Center-2/2-2/3
 Columbia, SC-Carolina Coliseum-2/5-2/7
 Raleigh, NC-Dorton Arena-2/10-2/14
 Charlotte, NC-Coliseum-2/17-2/21
 Fayetteville, NC-Crown Coliseum-2/25-2/28
 Cincinnati, OH-The Crown-3/3-3/7
 Baltimore, MD-Balt. Arena-3/10-3/21
 Wash. DC-MCI Center-3/25-3/28

ALL NEW 129th EDITION RED UNIT !!!!
 Orlando, FL-Arena-1/15-1/17
 Birmingham, AL-Birm.-Jefferson CC-1/20-1/24
 Greenville, SC-Bi-Lo Center-1/27-1/31
 Knoxville, TN-Civic Coliseum-2/3-2/7
 Greensboro, NC-Coliseum-2/10-2/14
 Richmond, VA-Coliseum-2/17-2/21
 Norfolk, VA-Norfolk Scope-2/24-2/28
 Hampton, VA-Hampton Coliseum-3/2-3/7
 E. Rutherford, NJ-Contl. Airlines Arena-3/9-3/14
 Uniondale, NY-Nassau Coliseum-3/16-3/22
 Madison Square Garden-NY-3/26-4/11

BACK YARD

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EULOGY TO MY FATHER

On 23 December '98, David "Buddy" Watkins passed on to his final retirement from a long career that spanned

South America, North America & Cuba. His show business career began when he was very young, working with his father, Ira. J. Watkins. His widow is Elsa Margarita Watkins, whom he met & married in Venezuela while working on Circus Razore in 1957. The "Watkins Famous Chimps" set a standard in the industry in many ways. His father worked adult male and female chimps, which in the early 40s was not common place. When his father died in Dec. 1959, "Buddy" took over the act combining acrobatics, elegant wardrobe & comedy to the delight of the audience. His wife, Elsa, sold the act with her gowns & sophisticated style. In 1965, "Buddy" quit his life on the road to work at he St. Louis Zoo. In 1968, he broke new ground as a trainer at the Louisville Zoo with his elaborate productions, including his 2 children, Jody & Rachel. In 1979, he worked at the Monkey Jungle as a chimpanzee trainer. He retired from public life in 1990, moving to Gibsonton, FL, with Elsa, to live in their home built for his retirement. "Buddy's" love for his animals & family was shown in many ways. If money was scarce, the chimps ate produce in season & the family ate beans & rice. In winter, he would sleep in the truck on a cot to ensure he could change the propane heater that kept his animals warm. When he decided to quit the road, for the sake of his children's education, he mourned the retirement of his chimp act for several years. "Buddy" delighted in his family more than anything in life. He often told his wife, Elsa, how much he loved her & called her his angel. He was proud of the accomplishments of all his children, especially Jody & Rachel who carry on the third generation of working with animals. Jody & I are honored to have been blessed with the benefit of his years of experience in animal care. Our career paths were started by the work & teachings of our father. Written by Rachel Watkins Rogers, Dec. 29, 1998. Thanks to Gee Gee Engesser for sending this in.

Barry DeChant reports he & his wife, Karen, are joining Kelley-Miller, clowning. Also on the show will be Cheeko & the Vasquez flyers. They are at Sun N Fun RV Park in Sarasota. They went to Kay Rosaire's party 12/27 & chatted with Fred Logan & Jackie LeClaire.

Vincent Pagliano, Vappo, the clown, just closed with "Super Cirque" in Canada. He said he was on the Jordan Circus in 1998 & in Canada with Rosa & Bobby Gibbs in 1996. Can't wait to see the booklet he made about the show. Thanks, Vince.

"COURTSHIP OF A CLOWN....."

Wandering about in the lively Negro quarter, near the cars after the show, we got invited into a be-bop record shop. A bizarre cigar-smoking visitor with a quarter stuck in his ear told us all about Satchel Paige, the celebrated pitcher.

Aug. 18, Pocatello, ID—Lot overrun with Indians from the nearby reservation. Whiskers recalled the Seminole she'd seen at Winter Quarters with a complete set of gold uppers & lowers.

Aug. 19, Butte, MT—Hail storm just before the matinee, icy stones rolling down the Big Top. Got answers from my letters to Roberta's parents. Her mother says, ". . . hope you will like your new family. I am so happy for you both. It was fate. You were meant for each other. It seems so exciting that you should both find the only one in such strange surroundings. All my love & best wishes for lifelong happiness."

Aug. 20, Missoula, MT—Aft. only. Ballet girls went horseback riding until train time. Had Whiskers measured for ring size. Kellogg & Bill Hanlon stayed downtown in a bar too long & missed the train. Couple of bandmen did, too & Merle Evans wired funds back the line to them. Whiskers & I only just got aboard, would have been left too but we quarreled & didn't stay in town for dinner.

Aug. 21-Spokane—Kellogg nearly missed the train again tonight. Came running down the track, beer glass still in hand. These sudden take-offs are hard on midguts & small dogs. The former have to be lifted quickly up the high train steps & the latter come aboard at the ends of their leashes, hoist heavenward like Little Eva.

Aug. 22, en route—All day on the train. Mountains & gorges. Had to cover our noses with wet towels going thru the tunnels. Picked some wild red columbine & pine to sweeten my upper. Spent some time out on the platform with Horompo, the midgut, smelling the altitude & listening to him yodel to the passing peaks & crags.

Aug. 24, Seattle—My laundry has turned up missing. Almost everything I own was boiling up for the wedding. Sending laundry out on the circus is like playing a lottery. You leave it in one town, hope it turns up 2 or 3 towns ahead. Charley Bell, the clown, says all he got back once was 2 housedresses, & sometimes midguts get stuff that belongs to the sideshow giants. Milwaukee, the groom who had his finger bitten off, is dead of natural causes. Midguts took on the circus teen-agers at softball.

(To be Continued)

Andy Bakner reports the annual meeting of the Emmett Kelly Tent, Hagerstown, MD was held Dec. 6. Ed Meals, Pres., called the meeting to order, after dinner at Richardson's Restaurant. There were 14 people there. Pres. Meals announced that Kelly-Miller will be there June 4th & members will provide juice & donuts when they arrive on the lot. (I remember how nice that was, after traveling all night, to be welcomed by these nice folks. If I remember correctly, one night was VERY foggy! Cherie). Ed Meals then presented a check for \$100 to Dan Rohrer for the scholarship fund set up in the memory of his wife. Dave Orr gave a talk on the new train museum in Altoona.

He gave the members a large supply of Hanneford Circus publicity papers. Jim Harshman read a letter from new member, Paul Horsman-Welcome aboard, Paul! What took you so long?? He also read a letter from John & Evi Lentz. The 1999 Banquet will be held Oct. 9, with Rev. Jerry Hogan as speaker. The members voted to give money to the "Endangered Ark Foundation" and \$150 will be sent to the "Young Americans Highwire Troupe, of Peru, IN", as members Dan Rohrer & Dave Orr pledged money, if the Tent would match their amount. Andy Bakner offered to inquire about sponsoring the Commerford Petting Zoo during the summer. (Let's hope so!) Thanks, Andy.

Dale Riker reports that Johnny Herriott is breaking a 2 camel, 2 llama, pony act for Beatty. Dale has seen him working it & it looks great! Let us know more!

Cort Langdon reports that Tarzan Zerbini will produce the Add Temple Shrine Circus (Duluth) April 23-25. This is the first time in many years that Add has had an all-new circus. Tarzan is well-known & respected worldwide. The show is known for the many animal acts & exciting European performers. Reviews have given the show stars for "Best Performance," "Best Music," & "Best Lighting."

Nick Weber reports Sisters Jo & Priscilla, of Carson & Barnes, had an accident on their way to the Sarasota meeting of folks who minister circus people. Their van & trailer were totaled. They both escaped with only a few bruises. Folks enjoyed Dominique, eminent circus historian & asst. artistic director of Big Apple Circus. He was at all sessions. Dolly & Pedro have extended their run in Sarasota thru Jan. Their passion for our art is infectious.

****Jeanette Williams Christmas Letter To Tent Members, Fans and Friends****

Just to let you know what I've been up to this year, some of you have seen me at the Convention & some not. I am always working hard. I had a lot of dealings this year with China. I was there twice & let me tell you if you talk about a long flight, this was the longest ever. It takes you from Florida to go to Calif. forever & then you sit in the airport for 4 hours & from there you go at 1:30 in the morning & you sit 16 hours on the plane. That was tough. Then, when you arrive there, they're all there to pick you up, but that picking up business, because of traffic, 15 miles took us 2 hours. There are no lines on the streets & everybody goes where everybody wants to go & of course, millions of bicycles. I got really worried about the first trip I did when the 3 white tigers I had in the truck in front of me started crying because they wanted to get out & behind us, was a truck with pigs & they were grunting.

It was really a challenge, it was hot & I was worried about if I made the right choice of selling these animals to this safari park. I couldn't believe what I saw. It was the most beautiful park for animals-it's like paradise. They have everything you can think of. They had imported over 5000 palm trees; they have at least 6000 mango trees with fruit on it for the people to grab & eat. All kinds of fruit trees; like 4 different species of crocodiles-1350 crocodiles. They had elephants from China with very short legs, but very fat & nice looking & each elephant had their own keeper & trainer. They worked very well. They had no bull hook, no whip, nothing, nothing. They worked very nicely. They had very unusual animals that we'd never seen & will not be allowed to go out of China. They call it the Golden Monkey, a very unusual animal.

They had lakes & everything you can think of double & triple whatever we have. I have never seen anything like it. I was very pleased & it was a beautiful experience. After this experience, I decided I wanted to do more business with them. I have now completed a contract for 15 white tigers of Mr. Cuneo, of the Hawthorne Corp., who worked last year for Zabini & are now going to China after Evansville. We will ship them to Seattle & from Seattle, they're going to Guangzhou. I have 1 year contract with an option for 2. Hopefully, everything will go well & they will have a beautiful facility over there. The park owner is building an overhead grandstand for the public to seat 10,000 people. He feels that might not

even be big enough. This park is one of the main attractions with only animals & few animals performing. These people have up to 80,000 people a day in their park. It's unreal. With all these people there, it's still beautiful & super clean & absolutely great. Anyway, that's enough from China.

On another note, I would like to tell you about my most favorite person, which, of course, is Caroline, my daughter, nicknamed, Pinky. She is still with my cousin, Franz Althoff. They are on this horse show called, "Pferde Palast" in Germany. The show is very successful, it's very entertaining & some of our friends have been in Europe & seen the show & all thought it was outstanding. It's not just horses & boring; it has a little entertainment of everything in there, even a few circus acts. The business is very, very good. Last Saturday, Caroline called & told me there was ice & snow, but they had to turn the people away. They have a lay-over in January for 2 weeks & then they play again all the way thru July. Hopefully, she can come home for a little while. She is real American girl. Even though, she enjoys finding out things about ancestors, homeland. She's missing the hamburger & believe it or not, I have to take Oreo cookies over there. It's really silly things; like pancake mix, cookies, but what can you say. You only have 1 daughter. That's what she wants, that's what she gets. In Spain, she has purchased a new Andalusian horse & she wants to ride this horse with no hands. It's a little like an American cutting horse with drums on top. I can't wait to see that.

We have a lot of functions here in Florida. We don't have a circus parade, but it has already started with the Showfolks Circus & Flea Market & Dolly & Pedro's new Circus School. It's a very beautiful show with very good performers. I wish them the best from the bottom of my heart. In January, we will have the Ringling tent going up here, practicing for the new tent show & they will have a performance in February. We have the Gala for the Museum. This year, we will honor Dolly Jacobs, Mr. McKennon & Rudy Bundy. In other words, there's enough down here to entertain everybody. We are looking forward to seeing you in Florida.

I hope you'll forgive me if I neglect you sometimes, but I think of you all & appreciate you have chosen me. I am your fan too & without the Circus Friend, the circus would be nothing. I wish you all the best in health & happiness for 1999. Your friend, Jeanette.

(Thanks to John Bantock for sending this and Rich Deptula's permission to re-print her greeting.)

*****REAL ANIMAL WELFARE 103*****

By Mike Cecere

The ability to get ones message across is the key to getting your point of view across to the American public. And a lot of statements get made by people on our side, some very accurate, some passe, & some half and half, which often are a result of generational perceptions.

The first is that we are saving endangered species, such as tigers, elephants & other exotics. Well, at one time circuses were the only ones who had the trained people & had wherewithal to import large numbers of such beasts.

Most zoos in the pre-70s were, with few exceptions, little more than local Noah's Arks of two lions, two tigers, etc. Now, it's the other way around. It's the zoos & animal parks that are on the cutting edge of species survival!

The only animals that circuses contribute to the propagation of, truthfully, are elephants. There are unbelievably more tigers in North America than the whole rest of the world, including the wild. (Lions too!) that goes for all other types of large exotics that used to be mere curiosities in a circus menagerie.

Now, gorillas, chimps, rhinos, hippos, camels, zebras, and all types of exotics really reproduce in large numbers in the many public and private zoos and parks. The importance of the circus is to bring the wild animals close up to the public as ambassadors of their wild cousins.

The real deal is the habitat of all the wild creatures is fast being destroyed by climate changes & over-population in the third world. The other misconception is that the animals some how "owe" circuses their labor or need to "sing for their supper" or even one idiot reviewer said about a popular elephant doing rides to "earn her keep." Hey, people, when we signed on in the professional end of the business, we did so to get to work with the great beasts. They aren't a meal ticket. They are a responsibility and anyone you talk to that thinks they (the animals) owe them a living is in the wrong business. It's not what the animals can do for us, it's what we can do for the animals!

*****Liliane Parbot Johnson, Retired Performer,
Turned Charlotte-Sun Reporter*****

Liliane writes stories for the newspaper, but she used to be a circus performer! She was on Ringling in 1953, 54 & 58. While in New York, the show announced that children would not be allowed on the show. She noticed

that Cristiani Circus was playing across the Hudson River, so she & her son went over there and finished the season. She was on Polack's Western Unit in 1955 and with them again in 1956-57, and 1959. In 1960 & '61 she worked fairs, winter dates, parks with the Ronnie Lewis Trio. From there she joined the King Bros. Circus. She also worked a winter date with the Clyde Beatty elephants in New York City. She enjoyed seeing Dolly Jacobs new circus and was reminded of working in France with Cosack riders. She said you really get banged up riding the horses and she had the bruises to prove it! Hopefully, we will hear more of her memories of her performing days in the circus. Thanks, Liliane.

Cort Langdon reports that Channel 8 in Tempe, AZ needs your help. Ruby, the elephant, touched countless live in the Valley & beyond. KAET TV is working on a profile of Ruby, who died Nov. 6 at the Phoenix Zoo. If anyone knows of any home videos of Ruby, Channel 8 may be able to use it for "Remembering Ruby." Please send a letter with a brief description of what you have to: David Majure, KAET-TV Arizona State Univ., Box 871405, Tempe, AZ 85287.

Steve Gossard, curator of the Circus Archives at Illinois State Univ., reports he is going to be a first-time grandpa! His daughter, Stephanie & husband, Jim, are expecting in Sept. Steve suggested the nursery be decorated with a circus theme, but might lose to Winnie the Pooh. How about Winnie at the Circus??? Congratulations!

Bob Youse, Bethlehem, PA reports he saw a segment on Good Morning, America about a zoo elephant that paints and is pregnant. Has anyone heard about another painting elephant that is pregnant? Let us know.

Gary Thomson, Ontario, reports the Giant Holiday Circus was put on by Tarzan Zerbini. Members Arnold Speck & Paul & Winnie Butler attended at Sarnia on Jan. 1. Paul thought it was one of the best Tarzan has done. It was a 3-ring circus & all rings were kept busy during the show. Martin Downs-Fred Logan has a display of 25 tables at the London Wood Show Feb. 12-14. Last year, they had several tables of circus memorabilia too, which the public likes. Their first meeting this year will be Feb. 13 at the Nicholls, in London, with several Michigan members attending. The show is at the Western Ontario Fairgrounds, starting at 11 a.m. Thanks, Gary.

****ROMANCING THE WHIPSTOCK****

"Lessons From The Old School"

By Roger Smith

Clyde Beatty's whipbox was my responsibility in 1964. I kept the keys. My notebooks show he carried 8 stocks that year; 3 were 3' 1", 1 was 3' 2", 2 were 2' 9", and 2 were 2' 10". I inventoried his whipbox during our August 22nd stand, in Bloomington, Illinois. The rest of its contents will be surveyed in future articles.

Twisted willow whipstocks at that time were obtained from 3 main sources in Europe. The supreme willow was grown & fashioned into whipstocks in Perpignan, France.

By the time I got their Mr. Estevan's address, he was amazed I'd found him, since he was out of business. The German source, around the corner from Albert Rix's mother, had closed. The Italian makers, in Milano, from whom I got my last order, shuttered while I was at Jungleground. And Austral Enterprises deleted them from their catalogs.

There in Thousand Oaks, I imported 15 from Italy. I gave a few away, which were quickly mis-used & broken because nobody wanted to, or took the time, or knew how to cure them. Here's the Old School Technique:

Tools & Supplies

Twisted willow whipstocks	Rosined beeswax
Core (spring steel or fiberglass)	Pure olive oil
Two medium saucepans	Stove
Barbour's No. 10 shoe flax	Elephant manure (optional)
Cup hooks	Single-edge razor blade
Funnel	Towels

First, The Rosined Beeswax Recipe: Melt 2/3 beeswax and 1/3 crumbled rock rosin over low heat in any pan no longer wanted for cooking. Stir until blended. Remove from heat & continue to stir until the mixture sets, or the rosin will settle to the bottom. Once cooled & set, cut the wax into the desired sizes. Keep one for working; wrap the others in wax paper & stow them in the whipbox.

Now, strip your whipstocks of whatever covering every season. Bury them 8 hours or more in fresh elephant dung, which is sufficiently hot to expand the pores of the wood. In discussing this process with Gee Gee Engesser, she allowed, "Well, in a pinch you could use horse." Without missing a beat, her 6-year-old son, Bunker, admonished, "Elephant's the best!" It is, but unless you're a hardcore purist like me, that step, in truth, can be skipped.

Double 10 feet of Barbour's flax from the cup hook. Cut and tie the loose ends. Strop the length with rosin-wax. Open the 4 splines enough to insert your core of 3/16 straight spring-steel rod (which has to be specially ordered to exact length from butt to end of stock, measuring only from the coiled splines out), or similar length of fiberglass rod. Carefully re-coil the splines & bind them a half-inch on the end in hard, neat wraps securely tied. Always have a core. It beefs up your stock & supports it appreciably over long use.

Whether or not your stock has seasoned in elephant dung, warm your olive oil in a saucepan until you can hold your finger in it for 4 seconds. Don't let the oil get hot. Stand the whipstock upright in the second pan. Carefully pour the warm oil along the stock while twisting it, until all the oil is poured. Reverse the stock in the first pan and re-pour the oil in the opposite direction. Continue until the oil cools. With your funnel, re-bottle your cooled oil for your whipbox.

Never lean a whipstock. Either hang it or lay it down. Make a simple tied loop to hang it above your towel. Or lay it flat. When the last of the oil is clearly absorbed, you have a cured whipstock. But you ain't done yet.

Next issue: The Finished Whipstock.
After that: Cutting the Flat Lash
And then: Beatty's Rolled & Tapered Poppers

****Animal Trainer Wild About Job****

(1981 Waco Tribune-Valentine Archives)

The hours are rotten & the living conditions cramped, you move every 3 days & there's enough danger to give a veteran fireman the heebie-jeebies, but former Wacoan Roger Smith loves his work. Roger is working for Dave Hoover on the Clyde Beatty Circus. He loads, feeds, cleans, protects & watches the lions and tigers. He is in daily contact with the big cats. "I was born & later adopted in Tyler. We moved to Waco about 1945 or so and this has always sort of been my home base. I even went to the old Waco High School downtown. I was crippled up with polio in those days. I remember what sparked my interest in wild animals. My mother took me to see Clyde Beatty when I was about 4. Once I saw him with those cats, I knew exactly right then what I wanted to do. I've followed it ever since."

"I worked in the Waco Zoo for a time, even though I was underage. I got chewed up pretty good once, but I did it because I wanted to study with Beatty. I give him the credit for giving me goals, objectives; for helping me get

beyond the surgery & the braces. I joined him in Philadelphia in 1964 & stayed with him until his death a year later." The legendary Beatty was Roger's idol. As a boy, he saw the big game hunter's movies, read his books & listened faithfully to his radio show.

"I can remember every minute I was with him. He was a very patient man, a good teacher. I was his driver between shows & we spent many hours in his Cadillac. He was always pointing out things that would help me. In time, he entrusted me with the job of manning the door to the arena cage. His main scheme of teaching was 'watch me.' And I did. As a doorman, my job was to watch his eyes, to never stray. I had to be very alert for several hundred performances. He taught me the ways, the reasons, the methods for handling the big cats. They don't have that anymore. All of the great old school masters are gone. He was in his 60s, though he looked 35, when he died. Cancer got him, not the cats."

After Beatty's death, Roger traveled to Jungle Land in Thousand Oaks, CA, to complete his apprenticeship. Like most budding trainers, he studied under the famous "Tiger Queen," Mabel Stark, who already had spent 57 years with tigers by that point. "The two of us raised & trained 16 cubs together. And from her great No. 1 man, Benny Bennett, I learned cage construction. The two of us built 2 entire arena cages together. He developed a loading system for cages so that we could feed & clean the animals right on the trucks."

"After my apprenticeship, I went on the road along the West Coast with 3 different shows before the last one went bankrupt in 1969. From there, I joined Hubert Castle's Circus in Dallas for 2 years. I had 8 lions & tigers then. But in '73, my mother died in Waco & I came home to be with my dad." After a couple of years with smaller Shrine circuses, Roger got the call from Hoover to join the Beatty Circus. Hoover had just added 5 new cats & needed help caring for them. Roger also serves as backup man-the first man into the ring should something go wrong. He said this show is different because it combines lions & tigers.

"Lions & tigers aren't genetically or geographically prepared to meet. Even though virtually every cat in the last 50 years has been born & trained in the U.S., there is still the wildness ingrained in them. Together, they make a volatile mix in the arena, much more so than a single species. "Beatty made his mark by combining more than 40 cats in a small arena. It was there that he taught me to read animals. When a tiger's pupils dilate, when his ears flatten, when the tip of his tail twitches like a rattlesnake-

he's ready to jump you." "Lions keep their heads straight, walk stiff-legged & send their entire tails lashing about just before they decide to come at you. That's what I watch for. Hoover can't see all of them. That's why 5 of us back him up. Big cats are imminently unpredictable, even those raised in your house. Once they go in a cage, you are up against a wild animal-particularly ones you've raised. They know your scent, your moods, everything about you. When they decide to jump for you, there's precious little you can do to stop them. Lions are never tamed."

"It's not something you brag about, but all trainers have had some narrow escapes. At Jungle Land, I was working with a bunch of lions I hadn't trained-they were inherited. They were tough, aggressive, & Dick McGraw had to bail me out twice when I found myself on the bottom. I got pretty chewed up, but he continued my schooling, showing me in the next 3 years how to do what was necessary. But is always necessary at some point for someone to have to come for you sometime. When you work alone, of course, the peril increases one-hundredfold."

"I've been clawed in the face & on the arms & chewed good, only to be sewed & cleaned up in short order. I tell you, there's no glamour, no romance to that. One of the first things they told me was don't show your scars around. Most circuses have several old trainers who'll resent it. They've all seen friends killed & maimed with the cats. After the third time I went down under a cat, I didn't want that ever to happen again. It brings a lethal maturity. You don't tempt fate & I settled down good & quick. Thank God I learned under Clyde & Mabel, the two greatest teachers of all time."

Richard Albright reports the "Diamond" Jim Parker Ring No. 89 will host CMB Display at the I.I.S.A. Gibsonton, FL Charity Circus on Jan. 16. Thanks, Richard.

Paul Holley, Racine, WI reports the 34th Annual Delavan Winter Circus Mixer is Jan. 23 at the Delevan Inn Hotel. The fun starts with jackpots & a cash bar at 5:30 pm, followed by dinner and a program at 7 pm. The cost, including dinner & registration, is \$14. Reservation deadline is Jan. 21. Please send reservations to Circus Mixer, POB 1, Delavan, WI 53115. Have fun folks!

Rumor has it that the new Ringling tent will be up this week & there is a Big Apple Reunion planned on the lot!

RUMBLINGS FROM THE CRUMMY

By Brian Nunn

One night after the last show, we had the elephants fed & watered. It was about 11:30. Hawgjaw and I were sittin' in his truck havin' a couple of beers.

There was a guy painting a mural on the side of a trailer. He used a big slide projector and stood on a ladder. He traced the outlines on everything, then he marked the colors to fill in.

It took him all night; it looked good. I think he might have been from Europe or someplace, 'cuz when Vargas came to look at it, in the morning, he thru a fit like only Vargas could do. On top of this great wild animal mural, it said, "Circo Vargas." "This is Circus Vargas! Change it." It was a lot of work blanking out the "Circo" and painting "Circus" because of the different number of letters, but he got it done.

*Jane Randall painted the Toby Tyler trailers, did a nice job. "Bring 'Em Back Alive, Frank Buck" and a lot of circus theme stuff. She built and painted props; she made it all look real good. I liked talking to Jane, she knew a lot of things. She loved the business so it showed in her attitude and work. I would imagine she's in Florida some place, still helping to make shows look good.

*(Frank Thompson knows about this stuff.) It seemed to me when I watched some of those animal acts, the animals would queue to the music, almost as much as to the presenter or trainer. Which brings me to the difference between a real trainer and someone that presents an act that has already been trained. As long as the presenter works the act the way they've been trained, it's alright. I've seen some of them try and get fancy and since most of them don't know what they're doing, they loose tricks and sometimes, most of the act. Then a real trainer comes in to straighten it all out.

Bobby Hakes sent in the new "Barnum's Kaleidoscope" ad. "Give your serious side the night off. Experience a grand, new style of FESTIVE, family entertainment. A celebration of world class performers from around the globe. DELIGHT in the up-close action-no seat is more than 50 feet from the ring-within the most SPLENDID touring environment in North America! So, escape to Kaleidoscope for awhile. Be part of the WONDER and take home a smile." *World Preview-Sarasota Square Mall, Begins Feb. 26. "The Magical One Ring Experience From Ringling Bros." Thanks, Bobby.

OUR FRIEND, BOBBY GIBBS

Jan. 12: Just talked to Bobby. He has been moved to the Baylor-Johnson Hospital in Dallas. His phone number at the hospital is 214-818-9408. I am sure he would love to hear from his many friends. That switchboard must be very busy!! He said he is undergoing more tests, which they get him up at 4 am to do. They also make him walk the halls a lot, along with some other patients. Now, picture Bobby and the others in their housecoats and slippers! He said he expects Michael Jackson to jump out anytime from around a corner & start singing, "Thriller!" He said Jimmy Hall has made him a bear muzzle, so those Big Mac's won't fit thru it! Said it reminds him of "The Silence of the Lambs!"

He is on a 1500 calorie diet, which includes grape juice, orange jello and chicken broth. Sounds really tasty! He said that the food ads on TV don't help any.

The doctor has also advised him to exercise, which includes swimming. He has he has become the "Esther Williams of Dallas!" He also reports that Lisa will be staying with Turtle on Roberts Bros. Circus. That should make Turtle very happy!

We all wish Bobby the best and wouldn't it be nice to see him back on the circus lots with the elephants. Or if he goes back to his truck driving job, we may see him at the salad bars in the truck stops! Get well soon, Bobby. Rosa is mighty lonesome without you. God Bless.

Dale Riker reports that tickets are on sale NOW for Barnum's Kaleidoscope in Sarasota, which begins Feb. 2. He said he has seen the new Ringling show 3 times & would go back for more! It is really a gem. Even the "old timers" think this is one of the GREAT Ringling shows.

Rich Deptula reports that Rev. Pollone was in Sarasota & made the mistake of staying another day & his plane was detoured by the way of Cleveland! Rich met his plane and took him out to brunch. What a nice surprise!

Nicole Wright reports there will be a comedy jargo bull on Billy Martin's Circus, under the skilled direction of Debbie & Emil Goetschi. It's sure to be a real hoot for young & old. Jan. 17th Nicole & Shane open in Indy for Hamid-Morton Circus. From April-June, they will be with Super Cirque in Canada. Keep us informed!

Next issue will have a full report of Circus Flora in Scottsdale by Denny Childers, WITH PHOTOS.

Thanks to Jeannie Sleeter For Sending This!!

Madison Square Gardens

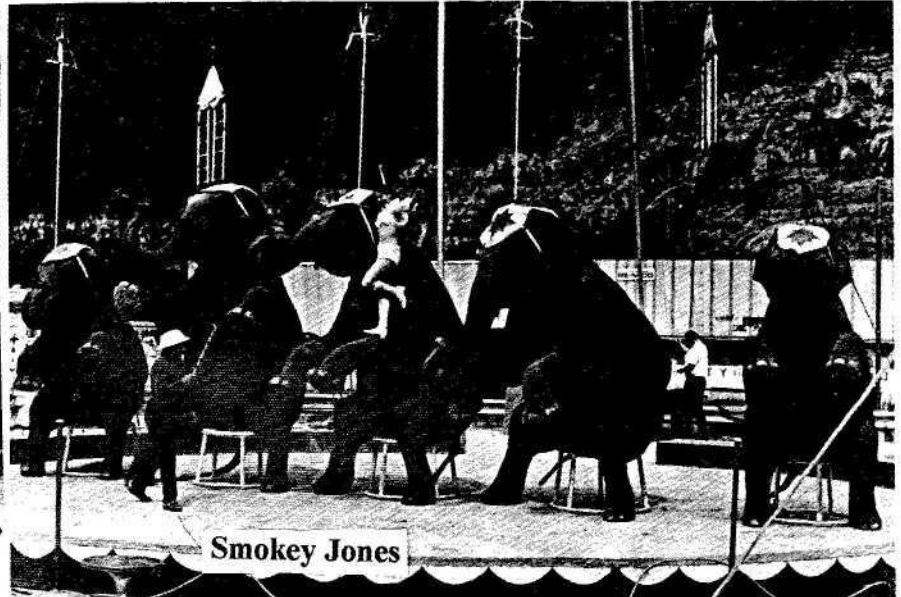


"The Most Beautiful Legs On The Show!!"

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Skee Otaris; Maxie Walker; Hugo Schmidt
Marion Siefert; Bunny White



Johnny Pugh?????



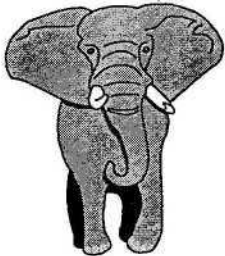
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