

BACK YARD

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Circus Cats and Other Acts

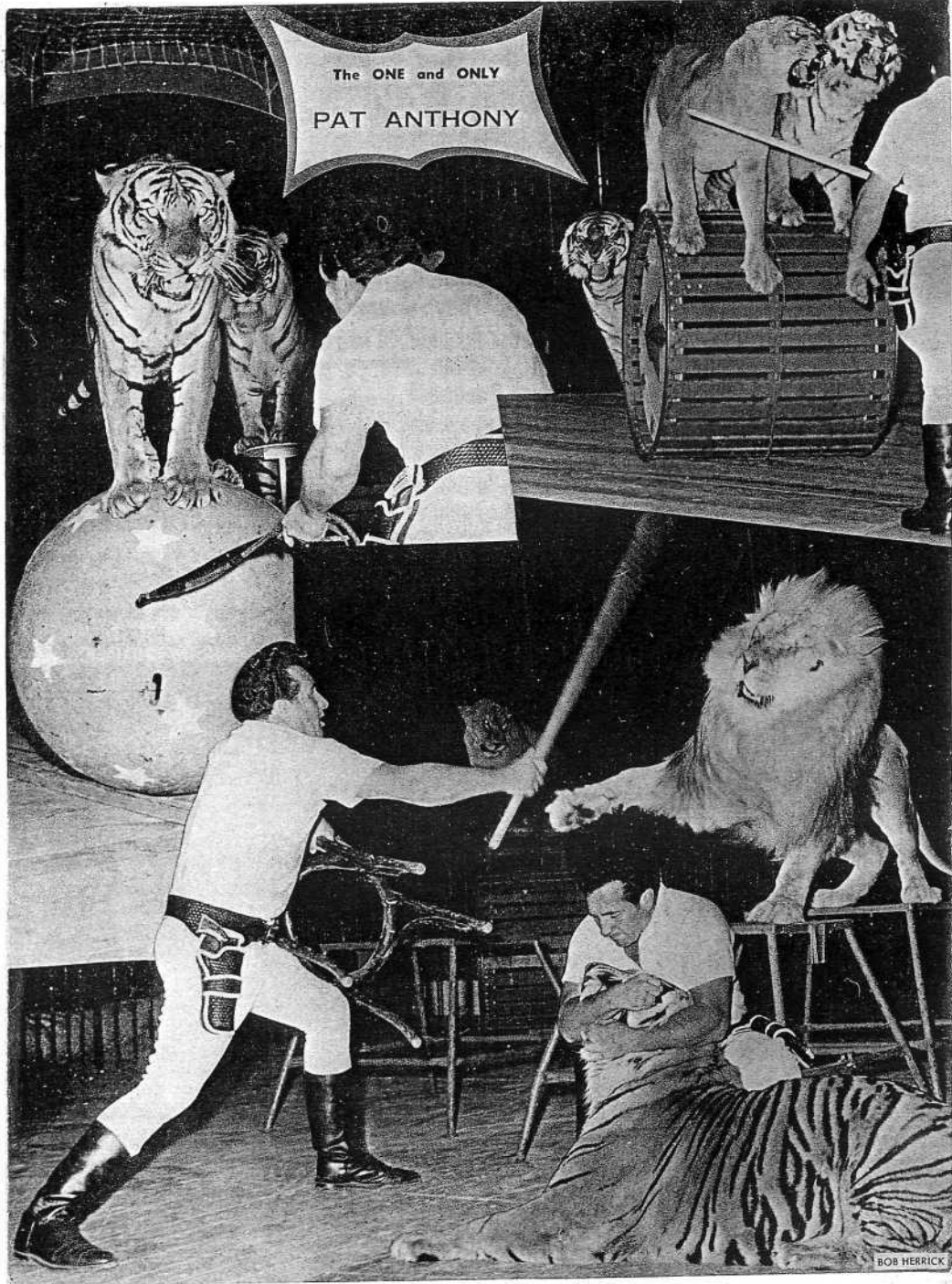
By Barbara Cowan-Altoona Mirror-April, 2000

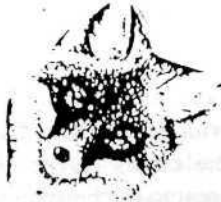
Kay Rosaire works with the big cats. She's in town with 6 of her Bengal tigers preparing for the Jaffa Shrine Circus. Earlier this week, Kay watched as Tira, a 3-year-old female Bengal, and Samson, a 3-year-old white male Bengal that weighs in at 450 pounds, exercised in a cage set up in the garages behind the Jaffa Mosque. Entering the ring with Samson, Kay petted the tiger's huge head. "They're really great with us, very affectionate, very loving. They even know our dog. If a strange dog came around, they'd get aggressive," she said. But she added quickly, "They are still dangerous.

They're probably 9th or 10th generation born in captivity, but their natural instincts are still intact. They're still predators. You have to watch out," she said. "I started with lions originally in 1973 and about 1975 I started working with tigers. I've actually worked with all different kinds of cats-leopards, jaguars, cougars. At one time, I had a show with all of them together. Tigers are very quick-witted, large, more impressive to the public and they're really beautiful," Kay said. She has put Tira and Samson together for a reason. "They're a pair we're hoping to have babies from this summer." Routines include tigers jumping through a hoop of fire, laying down (Continued on Page 7)



The ONE and ONLY
PAT ANTHONY





THE FOX !!!

My Dear Friends:

Guess what. The mouse on my computer broke and so I have to write on my husbands computer. He had to help me to find out how to get started on this. I just made up my mind that I will. After I finished writing you I'll go buy a new mouse. When you are used to do something on one thing. It is just difficult to get used to the other way.

Well the Royal American Circus is here in town for a vacation. I went over to see the sweetest little monkey you ever saw. I cuddled with him and kissed him and he just loved it. Then I went to see there young zebra. Also a sweethart and the two Sicilain dondeys, miniture horse, gots; sheeps and ducks. I could not see there camels as they are staying on a different place. Anyway, it was a treat to see all these animals in such a good shape. I love animals so very much, so I had a great time. The show will be leaving the beginning of July and as I stated in my last letter will be performing here at the Manatee Convention Center on July 10th, just one show 7 PM. I am planing to be there. Will some of you be there? After this date they will be gone till end of October.

Now I have to tell you all what my brother Mario is planing to do. This is his dream and he wants to and will do it. He is planing to go with the weelchair across the water on the high wire. No one can talk him out of it. You all know he was paralyzed from the wast down in the big fall in 1962 in Detroit. He was talking about this since then. He needs to find sponsore, the cost was estimated about \$35,000 as every thing has to be special build, permits, insurance and so on.

Talked to Jeanie Sleeter Singleton and she is doing great in her retirement but does not go out at night any more as she does not drive at night.

Nina Unus is last I heard still up north with her daughter who just had an other baby, but as Nina wrote me, she will be comming home soon. The doctor ware she works for has already called to ask

when she will be coming home, as he needs her desperately and naturally, as we all know Nina, she will not say no. She does not know that word. Work work work. That is what she will be doing.

Heard also from Wanda Joanides. She just got back from a two month visit in Italy with her brother Venicio. As she wrote me she had a great time over there. June Randell send me a note that she had been hospitalized for 4 days and this was also right over her birthday. She had lost a lot of blood and they had to give her 5 pints of blood and she is feeling great now and is back at work at Florida Trailer Headquarters. She likes to thank everyone for there prayers. I am so happy to hear about her feeling fine again.

Someone also ask me about Charly Bauman. They ask me if he still is in the hospital, but I can not give you an answer at this time.

Well, the weather here is hot hot hot, but we all are so very thankful that we finely got rain. Boy did we need it. My grass was all burned up and it is so nice to see it turning green again.

Well, this is all for to day. I just did not wanted you to think I forget you. Boy would I wish that we all could get together like the old times. I know it would have to be at day time and on a weekend, as some of us are still working, like Nina. Well lets get out thinking caps on and find a way. Any sugestions?? Please let me know and I will arange it with Dale Longmyer at the Club.

Oh yes Inge Smaha likes to send her love to everyone who still remembers her. Also Lotti Brunn. The Conways wrote me a while back a beautiful letter. People, we need to stay together, all of us are one and thats the way it has to stay. Remember the old times. I know they will never come back, but we, only we can rewve them.

Oh by the way, Jender Smaha are in town ore out?? With the Club closed, there is not much things to see each other. Fay Alexander is doing great and so is Rosi. La Norma has a hard cross to carry, as son Gilbert is in and out of the hospital. Mireille and Julian Arnosi, I do not hear to much any more.

(Continued on Page 5)

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

By Cherie

Before I continue with the 1954 Polack Circus program, I recently purchased a 1944 Peoria, Illinois Polack program from Nov. 23-29 that I would like to share with you.

The displays were: Happy Harrison's Midget Equine Review and Educated Canines; Red Carter and Frankie Little, clowns; Donohue & LaSalle, barrels; St. Claire Sisters & O'Day, cyclists; Cys O'Dell, aerial; the Zoppe Troupe, unsupported ladders; Bozo Harrell, comedy juggling; the Five Antaleks, high perch; Happy Harrison's Comedy Mules; Camereon & Stark, swaying tables; Harry Froboss, sway pole; Massimalino Truizzi, juggling and the Zavatta Troupe, horses. Owners were Irv Polack and Louis Stern.

The 1954 program doesn't list a town in the program-there are no ads from the town, just great photos of the acts and biographies of them. Baby Opal, in cartoon form, is on the cover doing a one leg stand. Before I get to the stories, I will list the displays first: George Keller's Jungle Killers; A Visit to Spanglandia with the Spanglettes and the Aerialovelies; Clowns, Lou Jacobs, Rudy Dockey, Harry Dann and Charley Cheer; "Presentations by the Spanglettes will introduce Jacqueline Hurley, Nelson's Pigs and Lovely La Norma and vocals by Ginny Lowry; Janet's Pony & Dog Revue; Sikorska Duo, aerial; Jacqueline Hurley, acrobatics; Norbu, ape-like gifted human aerial gymnast; Freddi Troupe, tumbling; Harold Alzana & Co., high wire; Besalou Baby Elephants, presented by Mac & Peggy MacDonald with Baby Opal; André Troupe of Palominos; 5 Haslevs, trampoline; Bob Nelson's Trained Pigs; Melitta & Wicons, perch pole; Lou Jacobs, midget auto; Lovely La Norma, aerial; Antonucci's Chimps, with Cheta, Bozo & little Poncho; Boliano-Ivankos, acrobatics; Nine Ward-Bell Flyers. Bessie Polack & Louis Stern, directors; Spanglandia conceived & directed by Gus Bell; Mayme Ward, Supt. of Wardrobe.

From the "Private Lives" articles (there are photos with the articles): "A fall in 1948 abruptly cut short the circus career of Jean Rockwell. Lou Jacobs went to the hospital to cheer her up, their friendship grew into courtship and in 1953, she became the great clown's wife."

"Between acts they perform as the Sikorska Duo and Melitta & Wicons-the dressing room of Mr. and Mrs. Curt Bokvist is the nursery of their daughter, Anita, darling of the entire circus."

"Mayme Ward, creator of the circus' costumes, is mother of 3 of the 9 Ward-Bell flyers and also a former flying trapeze star in her own right. In the photo, she gives motherly attention to La Norma."

"Prof. George Keller holds up his hand to bring his class to order. The class snarls back at him. His class has African lions, leopards, an Asian tiger & cheetah, a Mexican jaguar and 3 pumas from the American Rockies. He taught 20 years at Penn State in Bloomsburg, PA. His first efforts at animal training were with alley cats when he was a boy in Bloomsburg. In 1942, he was invited to show his animals at the Million Dollar Pier, Atlantic City. In 1952, he quit teaching people in preference for his jungle "pets."

Harold Alzana was just plain Harold Davis when he worked as a pit boy in the coal mines of Yorkshire, England. Since Harold adopted the name of Alzana, it has become synonymous with extreme audacity on the high wire. In the troupe is his wife, Minnie, also a native of Yorkshire, Arden Kreisch and Lynn Hutton-Williams, who fill the places his two sisters formerly had in the act.

"The Besalou Baby Elephants are making their debut appearance with our circus this season. Their name is a contraction of the first names of Bessie Polack and Louis Stern, co-owners of Polack Bros. These 6 little girls arrived in America early in 1953 and were taken at once to the wild animal farm of Louis Goebel, in Thousand Oaks, California. There, for a full year, they were trained by Mac MacDonald and his wife, Peggy. The star of the troupe is "Opal," termed by Mac

(Continued on Page 6)

THE FOX.....

Julian does not speak to much any more and Mireille is always working. The Strazans are also always bussy working and have not much time for lijer. Saw the other day the Haucs and chatted for a little while with them. They are feeling great and are looking great. Johnny Yong called me, I ask him when he will join us at the Club. He told me when he retires which will be in 3 more years. Right now he has no time at all. At day time he works at some kind a company and at night he works at the yale at the sherifs department. Max Frimberger is enjoying his retirement and wife Ushe told me she is semi retired. Cha Cha Zacchini Meluzzi is working hard for the Walker Bros Circus. As every one knows daughter Catia and JohnnyWalker are together for many years. Oh yes about the nuns- on Robart Brother. I was told that they had been before on Vargas. True or falls I can not say.

Just finished talking to Derick and Liza Rosaire. Guess what, they are going to first visit Kay and Linda at the Park were they are working for this summer and then to Pam & Roger were they are working. To make sure the motorhome will be alright, they went to Kissimmee to visit. I said what about Tony the horse? Oh, he goes with us and so the little horse and naturally there faithful dog. Then Liza said we also will take our two baby ducks. So they went with all of them to Ellians summer camp where she is taching horseback riding! They took Tony out and had him and also the dog performing for the kids. I hope they will have a wonderful vacation. Well this is all. I will write you more in the next letter. Lots of Love,

Your Fox

MOTIVES

By Chuck Meltzer

One can only wonder at the motives of the "concerned" owner of an African elephant who is planing to return the animal to its homeland. First of all, the animal could not be returned to total freedom without continual and very expensive monitoring by experienced scientists. This is a practice in its infancy. This animal has health problems

necessitating constant professional attention. Is there any guarantee that political instability common on the African continent will allow a long term existence of a compound?

Would not a far less expensive and sensible solution be found by giving her a home in a North American Zoo (one approved by the American Association of Zoological Parks). These institutions aren't likely to be destroyed by political upheaval.

The shipping of this animal, for no good reason, would cost a great deal of money, better spent on captive propagation. Human and animal population problems in Africa are subjects of much debate. Elephants are in this country to stay. On an allied note, we should be very careful of where we donate money. Compassion is a wonderful trait, but sensibility is very important!

NEWS FROM OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS

Gunther Gebel Williams has had an operation and I am sure he would love to hear from his many friends. You can send your get well wishes to **Feld Entertainment**, 4800 U.S. Hwy 301 North, Tampa, FL 33610 or to **Jeanette Williams**, 2011 61st St., Sarasota, FL 34243. Jeanette said she will see that your messages are delivered to Gunther.

Follow That Elephant! (Circus Bits & Pieces)

By **Bunni Bartok Perz** With Excerpts From **The All American Circus Trivia Game** By **Tony Bartok Perz** Bunni has found some of the "Follow That Elephant" book that they published in 1986. Here is a bit of circus trivia from the book: 1. Name six first names of the famous Cristianj Bareback riding family. 2. How much did Tom Mix get paid per week on the Sells-Floto Circus? 3. What year did tractors replace draft horses on the Ringling show? 4. Who owned "Fairyland Circus?" 5. Who played "Angel" in the "Greatest Show on Earth?" 5. What year did Emmett Kelly make his first regular appearance on the RBBB Circus? 6. The Cristiani Family came to the US in what year? 7. Who owned "Ring Bros. Circus?" 8. Who owned "Billar Bros.?" 9. Who was Princess Iola? 10. What are the most plange turns Lillian Leitzel ever performed at a single performance? (Turn to Page 7 for the answers!) This is a great book!

Polack Bros. Shrine Circus....

"one elephant in ten thousand." Her achievement of walking the length of a 25' promenade on her hind feet, walking back on her front feet and then balancing on one foot is without precedent in America."

The Antonucci Chimps are Cheta, Bozo, 3-year-old Poncho who perform with Al & Jeri Antonucci. Cheta and Bozo are movie veterans.

Other photos include Bob Nelson's pigs, Janet's Pony & Dog Revue and "Debonair French-born Andre Fox," with his palomino.

"The Ward-Bell Flyers are in their 7th consecutive season with Polack Bros. No other feature has ever been with our show so long. The original members of the troupe in 1948 were the partners, Harold Ward and Gus Bell and their respective wives, Millie and Betty. All 4 remain. The next year, the personnel was increased to 7 and since 1950, the number has been 9. The troupe also consists of Harold Ward's sister, Genevieve, Bob Porter, Walter Long, Russell Nafus and Bob Holman.

A photo of the Spanglettes included Kae Johnson, Marion Von, Betty Roth, Sylvia Witt, Olive Ruth, Kathie Vetterlein, La Vergne Kathe, Diane Stotland and Harry Dann in the middle of the ladies.

A photo of the Aerialovelies in "Rhapsody in Blue" included Janice Franco, Betty McVay, Arden Larey, Lynn Hutton-Williams, Genevieve Ward, Norma Nielsen, Millie Asher, Minnie Knowles and in the center, Lou Jacobs. In reserve were Kristina Guski and Ann-Elise Froysa.

The acrobatic troupe of Boliano-Ivankos consisted of Ivanko Stanimireff Spassoff, born in Sofia, Bulgaria, his wife Kristina, born in Danzig, Poland, Knut Stensrud & Arne Sorlie, from Norway and Donata Graziano from Italy.

Alfred Reiff, whose nickname identifies the Freddi Troupe of teeterboard acrobats, is of German origin, as are Rinaldo Wunderlich, Gunther Brysch. Youngest member is Alfred Reiff, Jr, his mother was born Gerda Haslev in Denmark and her maiden name is used for the trampoline and casting act of these energetic gymnasts.

Denmark also gave the circus world that dainty and daring trapeze star, La Norma; as Norma Nielsen she began life in the little Danish town of Randers. She is married to Andre Fox, the horse trainer of our circus. They have a 7-year-old son, Gilbert, born in England. The auburn-haired Arden is also seen as the "keeper" of Norbu, the "near human gorilla." In private life, Norbu and Arden are Mr. & Mrs. Norbert Kreisch. Norbert, born in Breslau, Germany, learned to make a monkey of himself before coming to America 6 years ago. Both were members of the Wallenda high wire act.

(To be Continued)

Little State Fears Big Animals

By Bruce Johnson

The Rhode Island House of Representatives passed a bill in June prohibiting the display of performing elephants, lions, tigers & bears (Oh, my!) in any environment other than an accredited zoo. This legislation, fortunately, never reached the Senate before the session ended for the year. Rhode Island was, however, poised to become the first state in the union to effectively ban the traditional American circus.

Pro-circus testimony before the committee that introduced the bill featured Heidi Herriott (OABA), Joan Galvin (Ringling), Bob Kitchen (former CFA president, Larry Records (R.I. native and experienced elephant trainer) and several others.

A local radio talk show host, Steve Kass, had been spearheading an effort by PeTA, going back some months. So, the battle is not over. The subject will come up again next year, no doubt.

Meanwhile, what had been touted, by some, as a major push by PeTA on the Carson & Barnes lot in Tiverton on July 5 amounted to 3 women, 2 small children and an infant in a verbal standoff with Don Horowitz, the anti-activist from Long Island, NY whose tireless defense of the circus is well-known. Meetings between Heidi, C&B's elephant trainer, Tim Frisco and members of the press, on that same day, were quite positive. Hats off to them both!

CIRCUS CATS.....

and Samson sitting up on a mirror ball. "What makes my show different is I talk through the show. I talk about the animals and their habits and a little bit about the fact they all belong to our family and they stay with us forever. They're part of our family. They all have different personalities. Every one of them had a different character." That family includes 18 cats-10 tigers and 8 lions.

All the animals don't tour together but spend time at the family's property in Florida. "We have a big natural habitat for them. All my brothers and sisters and my father were all specifically animal people. We're more in tune. It's not just something you can pick up after retiring from being an aerialist or something. It takes a lifetime to know how to do it properly."

Her 20-year-old son, Clayton, will begin performing with the tigers this summer, Kay said. Of the six animals in the show, 4 of them were born at Africa USA in California and were bottle-raised by Kay's family since they were about 12 pounds. She said wild animals born in captivity are more content to stay in captivity.

Scott O'Donnell, owner of the Vidbel Olde Tyme Circus, will also be bringing ponies, elephants and dogs to the show. This is Vidbel's third appearance in Altoona but it will be the first for a parade. "It's one of the fun aspects. We have some antique circus wagons coming. The elephants will be in the parade, Kay Rosaire and Clayton will ride in one of the wagons with one of her big cats." Camels will also be in the parade and give rides.

"The circus doesn't get the chance to participate in parades as much as they would like," said Scott. "It stirs interest. It's a throw back to the way they used to announce the circus arriving in town. Also in the circus are the Two Adams and their Canine Stars, whose trademark is a poodle that does a one-paw stand; Armendo Cristiani, a juggler originally from Italy and the Ryjkovs from the Moscow Stage Circus who perform a comedy plate spinning act and a trapeze act. Satani Demon will be returning to Altoona for the first time in 4 years. He blows fire

and balances swords. He just came off a Kiss tour, traveling around with the rock group, Kiss." After the parade Clayton said, "It was fun. Not everybody can afford to be at the show. The tiger enjoyed himself. He was checking out the crowd and the horses. Halfway through, he began to play. Rolled on his back. All kinds of crazy stuff." "Altoona is a good circus town, said Kay Rosaire. "The people are very sweet here."

Thanks to **Dick McGivney** for the photos and sending in the article, used by permission of the *Altoona Mirror* Editor, **Raymond Eckenrode**.

FOLLOW THAT ELEPHANT.....

The answers to Bunni & Tony's Trivia Game: 1. Oscar, Daviso, Lucio, Belmonte, Cosetta, Chita, Corcaida, Pete, Ortans, or Mogador (Paul). 2. Ten thousand dollars a week. 3. 1939 4. Obert Miller (D.R.'s father). 5. Gloria Grahame 6. 1942 7. 1934 8. Franco & Lucy Richards. 9. Arthur Stermack 10. 239 non-stop. Well, this is just a sampling of the question & answers! So, if you'd like to read more of Bunni's poems and 180 trivia questions, 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 1986 price! And there are a lot more of Bunni's drawings and the book is 98 pages. A great addition to your library and also send the same amount for her first book, "Black Bras Don't Show the Dirt."

News From Our Circus Friends

***Charlie Simpson** went to see the **Nerveless Nocks** at the Fourth of July Celebration in Houston. They had the sway poles and performed on the trapeze under the helicopter, piloted by **Eugene, Jr.**

***Rumor has it** **Shane Johnson** has joined the **George Carden Circus** with this tiger act. **Jamie Garcia's Circo Garcia** is still showing around Houston, Texas. **Mike Clark** is playing fairs with his big cat wild animal presentation.

Dave Hoover will be taking out a show of his own??? Let me know if you hear any more news about these items! Always happy to hear from you.

RINGLING RED: 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; Boston-10/13-22

RINGLING BLUE: 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": Pittsburgh-7/28-8/13

BIG APPLE CIRCUS: Shelburne, VT-7/20-24

Carson & Barnes: Ft. Dix, NJ-7/16-17; Williamstown-7/18; Chestertown, MD-7/19; Cambridge-7/20; Crownsville-7/21-22; Andrews AFB-7/23; Lexington Park-7/24-25; Quantico, VA-7/26; Tappahannock-7/27; Williamsburg-7/28; Poquoson-7/29

Sterling-Reid Circus: Flemington, NJ-7/17-18; Phillipsburg-7/19-20; Edison-7/21-23; Schnecksville, PA-7/24-25; Scranton-7/26-27; Bridgeport, CT-7/28-30

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.

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

Roberts Bros Circus: 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: 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

Walker Bros. Circus: Delavan, WI-7/21-22; East Troy-7/23; Watertown-7/24-25; Middleton-7/26-27. Thanks to **Paul Holley** for the update!

BACK YARD

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News From Our Circus Friends

***Robert and Lou Flowers-Stoddard** will celebrate their 50th Anniversary August 19th in Commerce, Texas. "Ain't love grand?" Their announcement has a great photo of "Honey" and "Boppo" in clown costumes! Those wanting to send congratulations to the happy couple, please send to 611 Caven Rd., Duncanville, Tx 75116. Thanks to **Bobby Gibbs** for sending the announcement!

***Richard Via**, of Hawaii, writes that **Circo Garcia**, from Mexico, will be part of the Hawaii State Fair July 28-August 6. He also says he and **Kent Ghirard** visited the seals and bears, as asked in a previous issue. The seals were very interesting and entertaining, presented well in 2 outdoor tanks. "I have not seen performing seals for so long, it was fun to see them again. I also learned something about why they are so good at balancing balls on their noses. Their whiskers turn up to make a "cup" which helps hold the ball in place. Everyone was close enough to observe this when it was pointed out. The minute the ball got close to the nose, the whiskers turned up. The bears were beautiful." Unfortunately, the lights weren't on for the afternoon show and the bears were hard to see.

***Mike and Silvius Piccollo** and **Bill Watson** recently celebrated their birthdays! Happy Birthday fellows! Bill is getting his circus model ready for Uniontown, with **Jerry Schaub** helping him!

FOX 81 July 3rd

THE FOX !!!

Dear People;

It is not time for me to write again, but I got some news and if I do not write it now, I may forget it.

Circus Hope closed its doors. They filed Chapter 13, what ever that is, I do not know, I had not studied law. Rietta Wallenda with daughter Lyric is on that show. As I heard he is a little behind on paying his people. Any way, Rietta and Lyric are right now stranded, they have to find there own way home, as the boss said he has no money to pay there trip home or to pay them. But he also stated that he will open back up in August. I guess Rietta will come back home to Sarasota. Ricky Wallenda is also working for Circus Hope. He was booking the dates for them. Hopefully he will get his money back from that show. Rietta is now with Reithoffer shows.

Also, I went to the grocery store and ran in to Karla Lenaris. I tell you the truth, I did not know that Lois and him were already divorced for 9 years. They also sold Karls Kennel. Here I drove by there all the time and did not know that Karl did not live there any more. Well he told me that he had moved a few month ago to his daughter in Tallahassee. But he was very lonely there and so he came back to Sarasota. Lois in between time had quite a while ago bought a trailer lot and a mobile home. So he was able to get a lot and a trailer in the same street as Lois and now he is very glad to be back here were he has lots of friends.

In the Longboat Observer, there was a picture of Timmy Hernandez teaching children acrobatic.

Please do not forget that the Royal American Circus will be on July 10th at the Manatee Convention Center. One show only at 7 PM. I will be there and hopefully they will have a full house.

Marthy Kora also took his last breath. I am sorry but I did not hear about it when it happened, as I would have liked to pay my last respects to him.

Also now I am told that Theo Zacchinis wife is



gone from our midst. I just was told now and then when I phoned Cha Cha I was told it happened two month ago. This comming Saturday will be the 4th of July Celebration at the Club and I am planing to attend this. Just had a phone call from Fatima.

She ask me when the party starts at the Club on the 4th of July. I told her she was to late it all happened on Saturday the first of July. Well we used to have it always on the Forth, so I guess a few people got confused and would show up on the 4th. Any way she also told me that her brother Antar had a hip replacement and is feeling much better now. He first had fallen and broken his good hip and they had to replace it and now they did the other hip which had been bad already before.

The 4th of July Celebration was a big success. Lots and lots of people showed up. I can not mention them all, but it was a great time to renew old frienships. All the oldtimers showed up. It was just great and the food was just superb. Dale really did a great job with all his helpers. The whole Royal American Circus was present, the Rodos, lots of English girls. There were just too many people to mention all of them.

Jackelin Zerbini seperated from the Sterling and Reed Circus and as I was told went visiting her daughter on the Kaleidoscape show. I know I spelled the name wrong but what the heck.

Dicky Garden bought an ice show and will go out with it this fall.

I heard some other rumors but until I know they are true, I will not tell you because it would hurt people and that I do not care to do. Saw Ian Garden at the Club and he told me that he sold his mixed animal act and also Big and Little to Jungle Land in Kissimmee. Now something I have to say to Carell Buckley. I heard that she is one of the person nocking the circus insustry. Hay, you were there once and you even made your elephant rollerskate. I guess that was alright then. I know from people that you now take very good care of the elephants which you had been given, but that does not give you any right to knock everyone. I agree, there are a few people who (Continued on Page 11)

Banana Republic Express

By Mike Cecere

So, you are sitting there at the breakfast table slicing a banana for your morning cereal or maybe making a banana split with your favorite ice cream. Have you ever given much thought as to how that banana got to you? Probably not if you're like most Americans. When you think of where bananas come from you think of short Hawaiian-print shirt reading people with straw hats, singing that old Harry Belafonte song, "Day-O."

Well, that's partially right, but let's hear the rest of the story. A huge refrigerated tractor trailer zooms by you on the interstate. And you figure there's another tobacco chewing, double clutching, cowboy boot wearing, coffee drinking, waitress romancing, grits eating, gear jockey from Yeehaw Junction, Nevada. Gotcha! It's Bobby Gibbs!

Yes, one of the true personalities of the circus industry, a man with more friends than Santa Claus, Bobby Gibbs, after spending the majority of his life with Elephants and a whole menagerie of other animals, has now lent his talents to making sure hard working Americans get their daily share of the world's banana supply.

After a lifetime traveling the highways of America with circuses, he thought he would slow down a bit and spend more time with his beloved wife, Rosa. They both work as consultants with a number of Elephant and animal operations, always willing to lend a hand and keep in close touch with their many close friends touring America, such as Capt. Ken Benson, among others.

And over the years, Bobby had become an expert truck driver. So he started out moving a load for a friend and it has blossomed into a busy route and yet another career path for this busy man.

His razor sharp wit, winning personality and solid work ethic has led a number of large trucking companies to beat a path to his door. So, while the circus is very much still a huge part of his life, he keeps in touch with top Elephant operations like Capt. Ken Benson's and others via cell phone.

And the next time a big, refrigerated semi pulls up to the side of you, pull to the side and give 'em plenty of room, it could be Bobby Gibbs and the Banana Republic Express! God Bless America!

Passing of Our Young Circus Friends

*Condolences to CFA member **Gina (Ushler) Prosser** and **Joseph Prosser** on the death of their son **Hunter Riley**, who passed away at the age of 6 weeks and 5 days from birth related complications. Hunter is the grandson of CFA member and Director of Public Relations, **Betty Bartholomew** of Seattle, Washington.

***Lucas Scott Gebhardt** died of SIDS (Sudden Death Syndrome) on June 30th. The precious son of **Scott** and **Polly Gebhardt**, he was born on December 3, 1999. The youngest member of a family with a proud circus history, he was the grandson of **Beverly** and **Rudy Gebhardt, Jr.**, and the great-grandson of **Erna** and **Rudy Gebhardt, Sr.** The four Gebhardts performed in numerous circuses, fairs and rodeos as the Rudynoffs. Their expert horsemanship delighted American audiences for nearly 50 years from the 1920s until the 1960s.

The Rudynoffs are the namesakes of the **Erna and Rudy Rudynoff Tent #127** of the Circus Fans Assn. of America and the **Rudynoff Family Ring #60** of the Circus Model Builders. A memorial service was held in Lake Ridge, Va. July 6. You may send donations to The SIDS Alliance, 1314 Bedford Ave., Suite 210, Baltimore, MD 21208. "His life was far too short, but anyone touched by his smile will never forget him. He will be missed terribly."

***Mickey King** told me **Jeannine Pivoteau** came to America with a man that had a dog act. Mickey's sister, **Antoinette Concello**, taught Jeannine trapeze. Mickey said Jeannine married a man from Las Vegas, who helped design **Circus Circus** and helped built it. They later moved to Miami. Does anyone remember who this man was? We would sure like to find Jeannine after all these years. Does anyone know the history of Circus Circus building?

THE FOX.....

do not do right to the animals but 90 percent of them do the best they can and always make sure that the animals are fed and cleaned before they think of their selfs. If you run your business on a computer, this is you most valuable thing and you make sure it is taken care of properly, so if you have animals, this is your number one priority. They come first. I believe in that and I know most animal people do think that way to.

Well, now to the weather here, it is still very hot but we finally had a little rain and our poor grass it getting green again.

Oh yes Larson and Margie were at the Club to. Larson sold most of his property. I think all he still kept is his beautiful home.

All the Rodo girls are working hard in private jobs and they like it.

The nuns on the Roberts Bros Circus they are first of Mays. The other nuns are still with Circus Vargas I was told.

Well I better close for now as those who get the Back Yard did not get my last letter. It took one whole week to get to her. So this time I guess you will get two.

Best Wishes As Always,
Your Fox

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THE FLETCH FILES

By Mike Cecere

Okay folks, dig out your Pith Helmets and pop some popcorn, we are going to give you a Wild Animal Trainer's review of Clyde Beatty Movies. And fortunately, due to the magic of video, all are available for home viewing.

Clyde Beatty was undoubtedly the greatest Wild Animal Showman in the history of the circus and a man who knew how to use his celebrity and build on it. His influence on generations of animal professionals is giant in scope and he lived at a magical time in American history, pre-Discovery Channel, when the wilds of Africa and India were still mysterious instead of a subject for infomercials on late night TV.

Was Clyde Beatty a great actor? Judge for yourselves. He was lucky enough to be able to play himself, a one-man adventure novel.

First we start in 1932 with *The Big Cage*. This film dramatized the challenges of Beatty assembling his monster group forty (that's right, 40) lions and tigers mixed in one act. The historical outside scenes and inside the huge Ringling-owned, former American Circus Corporation WQ in Peru, Indiana, are priceless.

It's amazing to realize in these days when cat acts pretty much live out of their travel cages, (the exception being the huge Hawthorn Corp. complex), that a company would build a huge building with permanent cages and indoor practice arena where Beatty could assemble his acts. This is a must see film, very historic in scope.

Next, we have *The Lost Jungle* from 1934. This was originally intended as a serial with a dozen or more episodes shown weekly in movie houses, common in the 30s and early 40s. But it is now available on video in feature length format. This also has great Peru WQ scenes and great shots of a full-grown big cat (no cubs trained in those days!) being trained.

The plot revolves around Clyde Beatty going by blimp to rescue a shipwrecked expedition lost on a wild animal filled island. Many scenes were filmed in the Peru WQ barns, made up to look like a "jungle." Half the fun of this movie is picking up which scenes were shot in Peru. Filmed in classic B&W, this is a real gem, with of course, Clyde saving everyone and capturing big cats to bring back to the circus. Next, we have *Darkest Africa*, which was re-released in the 60s as *Bat Men of Africa*, due to the bad guys having a cadre of flying winged henchmen "Batmen," that Clyde had to defeat in his adventures. By this time, 1936, Beatty had left the Ringling organization and was on Cole Bros. Circus. He had formed an entirely new act with new animals and used the Cole Bros. animals as well as going out to Hollywood. There in Hollywood, he used a number of local

(Continued on Page 12)

TAKE A BIG BOW

By Charles Meltzer

With the defeat of Sam Farr's & Pat Derby's nefarious HR 29-29 bill, many people can take a bow. Most show owners and animal people pulled out all the stops. A lot of time, effort and money was spent. Thousands of signatures were collected and submitted. Huge numbers of people's opinions aren't likely to be ignored by politicians, hundreds of letters were sent to the media and to politicians urging the defeat of this bill, that would have eventually killed the traditional circus.

For the first time in history, we have an organization (OABA) in which both those in the industry and the enthusiast have joined to work for united goals. This was a huge step toward a self regulatory, rather than a solely governmentally induced series of restrictions. As the business is, by its very nature, highly competitive, fear of the competitor has got to be less important than the reputation of the industry as a whole.

It has been suggested that nearly one hundred thousand people a day vote at the box office, every day, in the U.S.A. They must be treated honestly and with respect. The war is not over; we have won only a major battle.

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THE FLETCH FILES.....

animal extras, including a harrowing encounter with a tiger trained to play-wrestle in a pit that got sort of out of hand. This and many other Hollywood close calls are related in his 1941 book, "Jungle Performers." Guest starring with Beatty was Manuel King, the "Boy Lion Trainer," who had his own lion act and was quite well known.

The plot revolved around a "Lost City" in the jungle, a Princess, bad white hunters, Batmen, evil wizards and hilarious guys in Gorilla suits (that fortunately found work later in Jungle Jim movies!) This is still shown occasionally on TV as Bat Men of Africa and is a must have for you collection in classic B&W.

Next a Pete Smith short called Big Cat College. This short film, shown before the main feature in the early 40s, showcased Clyde and his first wife, Harriet Beatty, who also worked cats and a lion and tiger riding on the back of an elephant. This was filmed at Clyde Beatty's Jungle Zoo in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., successfully operated by the

Beattys for several years. This also showed the training of several women student Wild Animal Trainers. Another short around this time featured the attraction itself. Both are well worth having, classically shot in B&W.

Now, we come to one of my personal favorites and one of the funniest circus-related films ever. Africa Screams, in which Beatty, teamed with legendary Animal Trapper, Frank Buck, worked with comedy kings Abbott and Costello.

This is a fall-down funny adventure where two department store clerks, Abbott & Costello, end up on an expedition to Darkest Africa to search for diamonds, while Beatty was capturing and "training" lions right there in the jungle. Along the way, they run into Frank Buck, himself on a search for a "giant ape" for a Zoo. (Yes, you guessed it, the guy in the ape suit.)

And they get into one jackpot after another in this hilarious B&W classic. This is a personal favorite of mine and real family-oriented humor so rare these days. Africa Screams was also a great favorite of my late friend, Elephant Trainer, Ted Svertesky. We often would come out with hilarious quotes from this film to boost our morale on muddy, rainy lots on the Hoxie show. Now we move to color films and by now, Clyde Beatty had the only other RR circus, besides RBBB in the country.

And this time, Beatty and his circus teamed up with the comedy team of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. This was 1953 and the film was called, Three Ring Circus. They changed the title on some of the wagons to the Clyde Brent Circus, tho you can spot several they did not.

There were several Hollywood stars who had parts in the film and for once, Beatty's cat act had a minor part in the film. His circus was the star. During the 50s, Beatty had a star-studded cast of circus professionals and really gave the folks a hell of a show. And it was a big circus, with 8 Elephants, liberty horses, exotic hoofstock and a top cast of human performers, all jammed on just 15 RR cars.

The plot revolved around 2 guys, Martin & Lewis,

just mustered out of the Army, finding work on the circus. Lewis, of course, after a hilarious series of job try-outs, ends up as a clown and Martin ends up as the show manager and saves the circus, including a couple of songs. Great entertaining movie.

And the last major film involving Clyde Beatty was 1954's Ring of Fear. This Technicolor classic was based on a Mickey Spillane novel and is an intriguing plot of a killer/saboteur loose on the Clyde Beatty Circus and Mickey Spillane, and another tough police detective friend of his, help Beatty find the culprit. Lots of thrills, and of course, Beatty and the good guys win in the end.

This was at a time Beatty had an astounding cast of circus talent in his show which is a must-see in itself. As the entire film takes place on the show, including a downtown parade, set up, loading & unloading of the train, this is a must see Technicolor classic. And a must for serious circus collectors.

Beatty also made several appearances on major TV shows with his act, such as the Jack Paar Show and several exciting appearances on the Ed Sullivan Show. Now, tho many of these movies are commercially available on video, I suggest the reader check with the Circus Video King, Mr. Jim Ridenour in sunny Sarasota, Fla. Jim has an extensive selection of videos available at very high quality and very reasonably priced.

Check with him First. I have obtained much of my Clyde Beatty Collection as well as other tapes from him and can tell you they are all quality products.

Now, as for the Clyde Beatty books, The Big Cage, Jungle Performers and Facing the Big Cats, as well as photos and other Beatty memorabilia, contact Paul Horsman, bookseller to the Stars, from scenic Port Byron, NY. So put on your pith helmet, pop some popcorn and enjoy your Clyde Beatty Film Fest. God Bless America! (And contact Earl Schmid, of Pittsburgh, for photos of Mr. Beatty)

Circus Historical Society Convention

Time is getting closer for this gathering in Bloomington/Normal, Illinois so if you plan to attend, please send in

your registration fee of \$98 per person to **Dave Price**, 1954 Old Hickory Blvd., Brentwood, TN 37027. Registration closes August 1st. If you have any questions, please call **Richard Reynolds** at 404-252-5449 or e-mail Richard at RJR3RD@aol.com. The Convention is Sept. 7-9, with registration on Sept. 6th at the hotel. Convention headquarters will be at the Best Western University Inn, 6 Traders Circle, Normal, IL 61761. Please call 309-454-4070 or 800-528-1234 to reserve your room, which is a special rate of \$54.25 per night. Refer to the "Circus Historical Society Block" to obtain the special reduced rate for single or double! You won't want to miss the Carson and Barnes Circus on Sept. 7. Papers will be given by Fred Dahlinger, Linda Fisher, Steve Gossard, John McConnell, Brett Mizelle, Bill Stout, Stuart Thayer, Clifford Watkins and your own, Cherie, among others. Decisions have to be made about meeting room size, so please get your reservations in soon.

News From Our Circus Friends

***The Bindlestiff Family Cirkus** will have a CD Release Party July 19 at the CBGB Gallery, 315 Bowery, New York City. Admission is \$8, \$6 for clowns in make up.

***Chuck Burnes writes** that there was an error in the last issue and therefore, an error on the **Ringling** home page. **P.T. Barnum** was born in Bethel, Ct., not Danbury, as stated. Thanks, Chuck.

***Bob Kitchen writes** "The Rhode Island bill to ban exotic animals never made it to a vote in the Senate, so it is dead for the year. **Heidi Herriott** was in the area & talked to fans at **Carson & Barnes** at Tiverton, RI. The rumored "big" animal rights demonstration turned out 3 adults and a couple of kids. **Don Horowitz** carried his pro-animal signs and counter demonstrated.

***The USDA & Manuel Ramos** have agreed to a consent decision & order regarding violations of the Animal Welfare Act. USDA's Michael Dunn said "This is an important victory for the animals. The way we can ensure health & safety of Ramos' animals is to make sure they are relocated. He now has 2 months to transfer all regulated animals to other facilities that we must approve." Ramos' license is revoked & he will not be able to obtain a new one. If the animals are not sold within the 60 day time period, they must be donated to an APHIS approved facility. All sales must be approved by APHIS.



A PAWS FROM MOZART

By Mozart Valentine

MEOW everyone, welcome back to my column. Mom decided not to apply at the Zoo and instead interviewed for the History Education Dept.'s secretary at Illinois State University. This is within the department she works in now, but a different office AND windows! Yesterday, she found out she got the job. Way to go Mom! Now she can afford more treats for us, and the birds, squirrels & rabbits.

My friend, **Richard Reynolds**, sent an article about the Atlanta Zoo. "Thanks to the pandas, who arrived last November, the Zoo expects about one million people to pass thru the Zoo's turnstiles this year. It has been standing room only in the climate-controlled panda viewing area. The pandas busily chew up the 40 to 80 pounds of bamboo they eat a day-and wow the crowds. Lun Lun and Yang Yang are on a 10 year loan from China. Local residents grow bamboo in their yards and the Zoo buys from these folks. Part of the Zoo's admission price goes to the Chinese researchers, who receive \$1 million every year of the panda loan.

Friend **Chuck Elwell**, of Vermont, sent along a clipping from the paper. He has great stationary too! Chuck's Circus Model Builder number is 41, CHS number is 229 and CFA number 1369! There was a truck fire July 3 on **Roberts Bros. Circus** on their way from Cheshire, Mass. to Willington, Vt. The truck was pulling an 18' trailer when the engine compartment overheated and caused the truck to catch fire. Firefighters quickly extinguished the fire and kept the trailer, containing 2 boa constrictors, cool. The snakes survived. 2 fire trucks and 20 firefighters responded to the call. I bet "**Boo**" could have put the fire out all by herself! A laugh from Britain: A cat chased a mouse up a 75' clock tower and stuck there for 3 days! Passers-by alerted rescuers after hearing **Kitty** meowing with its head poking thru the clock face. Her owner tried to coax her down, but she was truly stuck. The fire chief said, "The tower was too unstable to risk

sending someone up. In the end, we had to bring in an extra-long ladder to get her off."

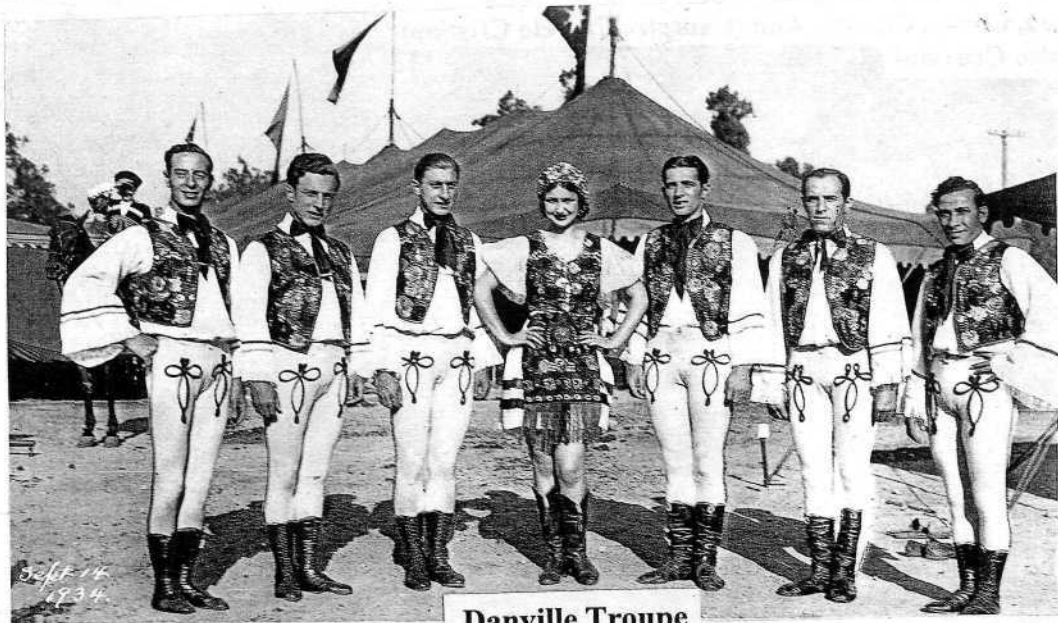
A sad note from India. **Ganesha**, who marched in several festival processions for nearly 50 years, has died at age 72. He was given a tearful farewell by hundreds of people. He had become arthritic and weak and died of natural causes, said the executive director of the **Mysore Zoo**. Ganesha, an albino elephant, was captured in 1948 and offered as a gift to the zoo by the local king. He is survived by a 47-year-old mate, **Padmavati**, a son, a daughter and a granddaughter.

From St. Paul, Minn.: 2 male orangutans died at the **Como Zoo** June 29. Yew toxicity is believed to be the cause of death. Yew is a toxic plant and they were in the area next to their exhibit. All of the zoo's 7 orangutans had access to the plant material, the other 5 appear to be alright.

Another sad note about felines: The death toll of tigers at the **Nandankanan Zoo** in India rose to 12 on July 7. A team of experts arrived from New Delhi to investigate the tragedy. The tigers died within 3 days after undergoing treatment for a parasitical infection. 4 other tigers are now "out of danger." The mass deaths have provoked a public outcry in India, amid accusations Zoo authorities were negligent. Another tiger died in similar circumstances in the Zoo June 23. It is unclear if they died of the infection or a reaction to the drug **berenyl**, used in their treatment.

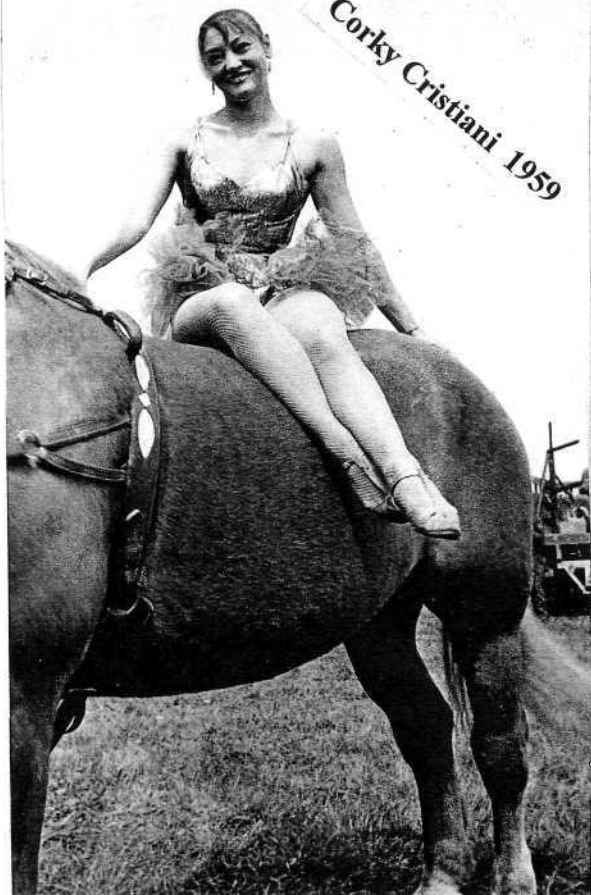
My friends **Dick & Doris Menkel** visited with **Khris Allen & Colleen Perkins**, who will be at the **Ohio State Fair**. **Jimmy Cole** was also visiting and he showed them pictures that he had of **Tammy Wallenda** and her cats.

Friends **Earl & Bernice Krauzer** of New Hampshire, visited the **Beatty Circus** in Natick, MA. He visited with **Omi Logan, Larry & Sheila Sheffield, Leigh Ketchum and Jimmy James**. He said it was an excellent show. Earl said the picture of **Elly Ardely** brought back memories. His sister used to shop in Elly's shop in Sarasota. Well, that's about all for now. Enjoy getting your letters so let me hear from you. **MEOW FOR NOW, MOZART.**

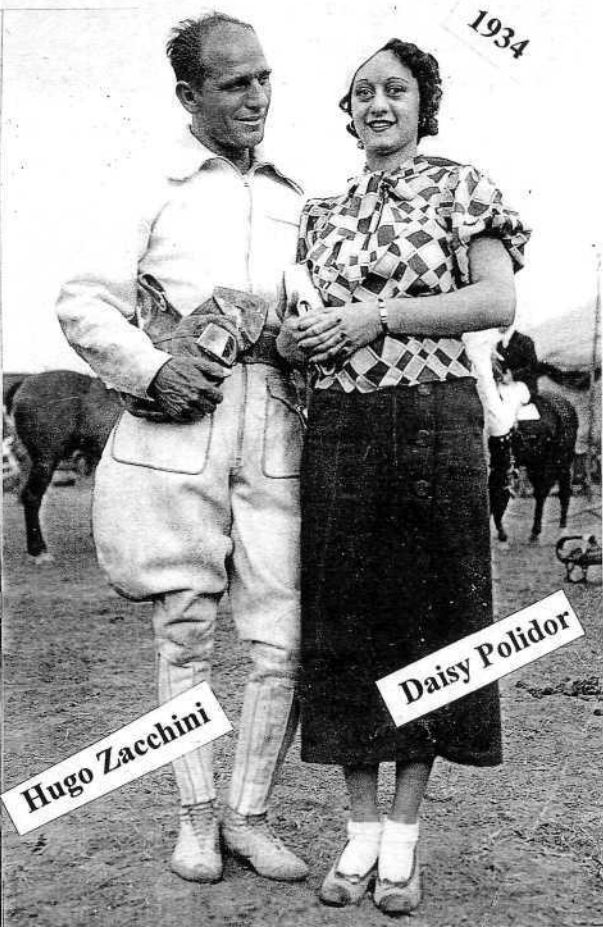


Danville Troupe

Sept 14
1934



Corky Cristiani 1959



1934

Hugo Zacchini

Daisy Polidor

Norma Cristiani and grandson, John
Remo, Corky, Cosetta, Ann (Canestrelli), Pete Cristiani
Daviso Cristiani

Kent Ghirard Collection Photo By Jim Parker



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