

BACK YARD

Volume IV, Issue #63

March 15, 1999

DEATH-DEFYING CIRCUS BEAUTIES *Back Stage Interview With Brave Girls*

By Edythe Farrell-July, 1941 (Article origin unknown)

An angry, ferocious lion jumped from his perch in the center ring, & leaped with calculated fury upon the buxom figure of May Kovar. Faced with a tragic situation which would make 99 out of 100 women faint, the plucky, attractive animal trainer held her ground.

Had she faltered a step, or lost her nerve she might not have been able to tell me this story, as I sat with her in her improvised wooden dressing room backstage at Madison Square Garden, and heard her thrilling, hair-raising tales of her narrow escapes! "Had I lost my head that day," May confided, "I would undoubtedly have lost my head in actuality. But in this business that is the last thing one must do. The job of animal trainer calls, first for a love of animals, and second, for a lack of fear. While you stand your ground you will be safe, if you fall back & show the animal that you are afraid, he becomes the master & you are lost."

Fundamentally, every iota of fear must be left outside the cage when the trainer enters. May's narrow escape came as a result of a change of costume, a change which the lion did not know or welcome. "You see, I had donned an Oriental costume for that particular performance. The animals had been accustomed to seeing me in the customary white shirt, breeches & boots, and I can't say that I blame them for their reaction. However, I managed the situation. I stood firmly, & looked fearlessly into the blazing eyes of the enraged lion. Then I shouted, 'Back,' and the conquered animal returned to his perch. I have never had any really serious encounters with my animal friends." 12 years ago, when May, a quiet English girl determined to make animal training her profession, she did so with little trepidation.

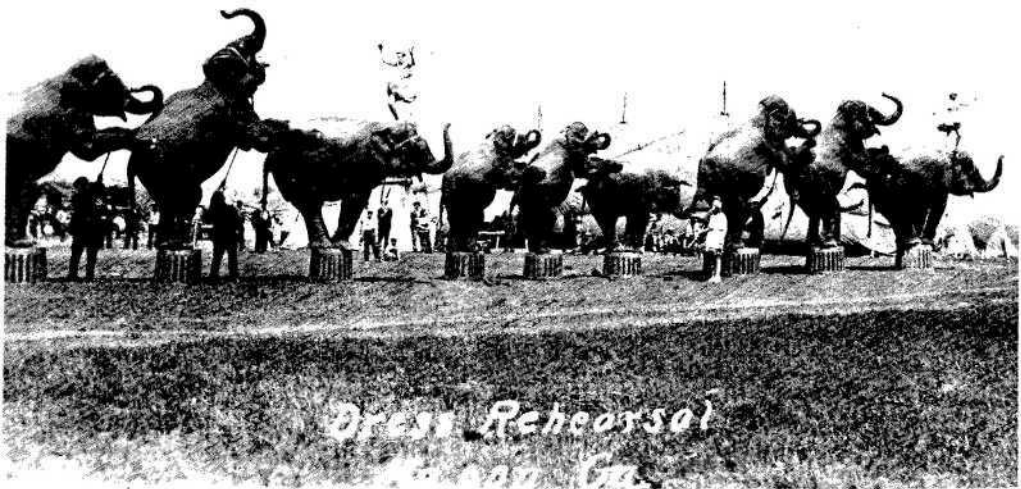
"Naturally, I had a sinking feeling in my tummy the first time, but my deep love of animals won out. It called for patience, & continued calm on my part before I could master my profession, but I acquired it in time. I learned,

Elly Ardely



very early in my career that in dealing with wild animals, you must have this motto, 'Forgive, but never trust.'

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Dress Rehearsal

Al G. Barnes Circus



Concha Escalante 1944



Al G. Barnes Circus

1935

Vernie Mitchell



THE FOX !!!

My Dear Friends;

I hate to always start out with sad news, Mrs. Schmidt, wife of the late Ugo Smith past away. I personally just know two of her sons, Eddy and Roman. I now it is a great loss to them and I like to give my remember the day she arrived in New York City with the Ringling Bros Circus. Full of joy and hope for a great future in America.

I was told that Tanya Herrmanns horse trailer burned up on the road, but none of her precious horses were hurt. Thank God for that.

Hey every one out there. The activist are on the march again in Texas. They are again planing to have the law past NO WILD ANIMALS in that state. So help to fight that law. Every one write to Donny Johnson a letter of contempt. I found a real cute thing in a newspaper and I will enclose this in my letter.

Tino Wallenda and family are in and out of Sarasota this year. Alida Zoppe' Cortez is on the road with her husband doing a cradle act, but will also finish all the dates with her dad Tino Wallenda. On the road Alida had an accident, a deer run in to them and busted the whole front end up of thier motor home.

Lijana Troffer Hernandez moved with her husband to Chicago and is working there with her ring act in a show. Lijana is the daughter of Delilah Wallenda. Delilah and husband Terry and son Nicolas will be this summer again in a park.

Rietta Wallenda Jordan will be working this year with the Nock's in a park. Also will be her daughter Lyric. Rietta tells me it is very hard work and they both are practicing every day.

Ricky Wallenda quit show business and is going to college but he still has one more Shrine date to fulfill.

Sheela Wallenda suffered a stroke a little while back but is recovering nicely.

Well there you got the news about the Wallendas except about Tammy, and that is a long story but I believe you all may like to hear it. Patsy Jordan decided to get rid of her cats, so she called Tammy. Tammy has no USDA licence so she went to a show owner and he bought the equipment and Tammy was supposed to work the cats. Tammy worked her head off day and night to get it all in

shape. Then the USDA came and informed her that two of the cats have to be retired. Well that left her with four cats and one baby, which naturally could not work yet. Also there was no time to bring the two cats to a retirement place so they went along. (The new cages are for the birds. They are so cloby and so hard to load. I think these cages are really dangerous, they do not have any seat belts on so they will be falling all over the big cages. Oh well, it really tells you that they do not know what kind of dangerous laws they enforce.)

Anyway back to my story. The poor two cats cried thier heads off every time they heard the music and felt terrible to be left behind. (OK Do not let them do hard work and let them come in and do little things like lay down and so on). Now there was a problem on that show. They had just one ramp for there semis, so the cats were to wait. Tammy did not like that, also there was never time in the arena to practice or exercise the cats. So natural she complained a lot about that. In between time the trailer she had been given to live in with her 4 kids had been wrecked so she had no more place to live in, all her belongings were now in plastic bags all over the other trailers on the show.

So then she came to Lynchburg VA, Tammy did the three shows and the cats were loaded when the manager (I will not name names) came and informed her that she was not to go on with the show but will have to go back to Florida. (Mind you most of the show had already left the lot to go to the next date). She ask, how will I go with my four children and were will I stay in Florida (Brian Franzens winter quarters) and what will you pay me??? Well the answer was, you are fired. There she was on the lot, all her belongings had already left and the cat trailer also had already left to go to Florida. Oh yes, she was paid her salary, but as everyone knows with no credit card you can not rent a car. So here she called home. Her mother almost went on a plane to rent a car for her.

There is no way do this from a different location for an other person. Well quick thinking she had a credit card sent to her from her credit card. In between time Tammy called Donny Johnson, who told her to come to him and he put her to work on the road with the Jordan Circus. The boss of the show called me and told me that he was under the impresion that she knew about her coming home a week pryor to Lynchburg, but the manager conveniently avoided telling her until after the third show of the day she was to leave. He also lied to the boss and told him that she had taken all her belongings.

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DEATH-DEFYING CIRCUS BEAUTIES...

"Animals like the black panther, are treacherous & full of guile, forever on the alert for the opportunity of catching you napping & you must never let them do that." Miss Kovar does not regard her job in a commercial sense, for though it is her work, it is also her pleasure. She feels always that she is working with those she loves. For each beast no matter how amenable or untrustworthy has a particular & distinct personality for this charming woman. "I have had some pretty close calls, of course. I have had bears hug me, tigers fall on me & lions chase me around the ring, but always I have been cool. I haven't emerged exactly unscathed. I've some pretty fair bruises, bites and scratches to show for these encounters but always I have won out. Quick thinking, & an absence of nerves has brought me through each time."

The cats & bears are Miss Kovar's life. She has a name for each one of them. Generally, they are named for the place from which they originate, like India, Bombay, Sumatra. By kindness & gentleness, Miss Kovar makes them respond to names.

"I will hold out a piece of meat & say, 'Here Sumatra, this is for you.' If I do that enough times, after a while the tiger will understand, whether I crack my whip & call him or hold his food out to him." Aside from her pets, May loves the hurry & bustle of New York, where in her spare moments she knits for the British War Relief.

"Most of the time, though, I am with the animals, there is so much they require done." It is the doing of these things which make May's animals seem like domesticated creatures as they perform their complicated tricks for the circus audience.

I left May's dressing room & made my way amid the maze of swishing elephant tails, blue sawdust & weary clowns to the box-like compartment of Madam Ardelty, probably the greatest trapeze artist in the world, who twice a day risks her young life in thrilling trapeze swings. The charming Elly Ardelty was on her famous hands and knees, scrubbing away in her attempt to bring order into the chaos of her tiny dressing room. "It is so feathery here. I try so hard to keep it clean but the quarters are so very small." Miss Ardelty rose to her full height of 4' 11" and drew her housecoat tighter about her small but shapely 98 pound frame.

"First you like to know how I come to be with the circus, yes? Well, when I was little girl in the Marina School in St. Petersburg, Russia, I am learning the ballet. Never once I think of the circus. Then I am making a connection

with a gentleman who works the trapeze. I am very thin and very slow. I lack what is needed for the work but the gentleman very kindly schools me for the art. At first he does it for laughs. He would not laugh, now, maybe," says Elly, as she tosses her lovely blonde hair while her eyes shoot fires of amusement.

"I make much advances, & then my companion falls from a high trapeze and dies." Elly said this unflinchingly as though it were the only expected fate of all good performers. She seems to take everything philosophically.

"Then I go on alone. Always I had been cool & calm in my work. You see that is the only way one can be on the trapeze. If you are frightened you shake. If you shake you fall. You must be very confident, because you can hardly breathe when you work."

"This time in Dusseldorf, Germany, I am making a swing hanging from the trapeze by means of a handkerchief clenched in my teeth. Then everything goes black, and I fall down, down until I am crashed on the stage. For 8 months I cannot even walk. I make a promise to my good friends that never again I will work the high trapeze. But the promise is hard to keep. I practice my swings while I am still on crutches. My friends see that my work is my life so they agree I better go back."

Just 2 years ago, John Ringling North saw the fearless aerialist work in France & brought her to America, where she scored an immediate success. Elly's lack of fear is versatile. The tiny performer, when she is not working, drives a car like a demon, rides a horse daringly well 7 is firm in her belief that the life of the circus is the most exciting in the world, & her job is like any other job & that the dangers attending it are all a part of the glorious adventure.

A fantastic Mother Hubbard clown escorted me from Elly's bare cubby-hole to the dressing room of the elephant trainers. A charming little redhead dropped her wrapper & chatted with me & donned a pair of stockings ingeniously sewn onto the white panties beneath her red tassel skirt. She was Evelyn McClain who works the center ring & whose dancing elephant Modoc, does a Conga to end all congas. Just 3 years ago, Evelyn answered an ad in a paper calling for circus dancers. The trim brown-eyed girl, who was a trained dancer & had appeared in movies on the Coast, got the job without any difficulty. Soon after 3 elephant trainers were required & Evelyn expressed a desire to learn.

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"THE FOX".....

Well, the boss assured me that he will make sure that all her belongings will be shipped to her. Which he did.

As there was some stuff left of Tammys in Franzen winter quarters, Jenny and sister Carla drove over there. When they arrived there at 9 AM there was no one there. The place where the stuff was, had a fence around and a pad lock. They both looked around as there is no lock on the first gate. The cats were there and they looked good in those big cages.

They waited quite some time then decided to ask around in the neighborhood but no one could tell anything. So they decided to go eat. After they came back, still no one around. So Carla decided to climb the fence to get Tammys stuff out. Jenny followed suit. Over she went. They carried first all the stuff to the fence and then over and then loaded it in the car. After they were finished at 1:30, there still was no one in sight so they left and went back to Sarasota. I wish I had a movie of it, it was a comedy act.

Derick Rosairs dog is making the big time. A television producer saw what he all does and hired the dog. I personally know that dog, and he is great.

Wayne Pilz is doing well after his very bad accident. He called me and sounded great.

Well, what the Ringling show is planning to do with the new show is every ones guess work. I know they gave the money back for the tickets which had been already sold here in Sarasota.

I hear that most of the shows on the road this year so far are doing OK. Joann Wilson is staying home this year I understand. She will be sewing costumes and training animals.

Also I am seeing the Herriotts around, so I guess they also will be staying around and Johnny will be training animals.

Penny Wilson is working at the Cars of Yesterday and she likes it. She told me there is no stress.

Jeanie Sleeter and Nina Unus call me once in a while and both enjoying their retirement.

Bobby Wainman is working now steady for the Royal American Circus which makes Deanna Stoll very happy to have her lover home with her. Debbie Eldridge and Phil Hall also are in the office. The young girl Stacy has quit so they have some new people in the office.

Cha Cha Meluzzi is now a days very busy stuffing envelopes for the Walker Brother Circus. Naturally it is for her daughter Kathia.

Well this time I talked a lot about the Wallendas. I hope you do not mind, but I thought some time it is alright.

Dr Martin was pretty sick had the flu real bad. He went to see a circus and the weather really got him down but he is all OK now. Thank God.

The tent from the International Circus School I was told is coming down and the tent from Ringling is still at the Fairground and they are still rehearsing.

Daviso Cristiani had his birthday party at the nursing home with lots of friends showing up.

There are some shows now who write in their contract that the act will be find \$500.00 if they are not 24 hours prior to show date there.

Well this is enough for today. I hope you are not bored with my writing.

LOTS OF LOVE FROM YOUR FOX

(The comic strip Jenny sent along is copyrighted, so I don't want to print it. BUT it says, "Feed the moat monsters! The moat monsters are starving to death!" (Voices from below the castle window-with the King listening.) The King looks down at them, "What's all the commotion down there?" A person in the near tower says, "The animal rights people are storming the castle!" All of a sudden, "Egads! The drawbridge just broke!" SPLASH! The King says, "A most fortuitous occurrence." (Great comic, Jenny!)

James Poage reports on 3/6, six members of the Jack Bell-Helen Billetti Tent (The Sporrers, Poages, Helen, and Betty Bartholomew) attended the Puyallup, WA Jordan matinee. They performed in a horse barn at the fairgrounds. Both ends were open, the seats metal & the cold was quite noticeable. They survived & enjoyed the show. The Poages will embark on Amtrak from Seattle to Chicago, rent a car & drive to the CFA Convention in Ocean City, MD! (Hope they win an award!)

Bill Prickett, Peoria, IL reports James Plunkett has the contract again for the Peoria Shrine Circus & they will have a new tent! The dates are June 10-13, at the Expo Gardens in Peoria. Lee & Rita Henneberry, from Toulon, IL are presently entertaining in the London, England area, with their comedy, juggling, magic & illusions show. They will be there for about one month. (Your editor used to work circus dates with them in the early 50s. They had stair-step children and when all lined up, look great! Thanks, Bill. See you at Ron Bacon's show.)

"DEATH-DEFYING CIRCUS BEAUTIES".....

"My dancing really helped," Evelyn said. "You see for this work you need a good sense of balance & an ability to jump from a height & land lightly." Evelyn's unusual piquant beauty of face & the shapeliness of her 5' 1", 110 pound figure, would have drawn applause on any stage even if Evelyn did nothing more involved than just stand there, but it is the death-defying precision of her work which brings down most plaudits. Timing is essential when working with the cumbersome beasts & Evelyn has a remarkable sense of timing, & also the daringness, so necessary for her unusual achievement. Withal, Evelyn was on the receiving end of a horrible catastrophe just last season: "I don't know just how it was. One moment everything seem OK and the next moment my elephant had brought its foot right smack down on me. I fainted dead away. I understand that what saved me was the fact that the ground underneath was soft, & I kind of sank down. All I got in addition to a scare was a badly sprained ankle."

"I strapped the ankle tight & swallowed my fear. If I had postponed making an appearance at the next show the fright might have had a chance to grow & give me a complex. So I went right out the next performance and made out all right. Of course, every time I work I take a chance, but then that's life."

And so it is that twice a day, three beautiful, courageous women take their life in their hands & come out smiling to give the circus audience a taste of spine-tingling thrills and chills via the death-defying route!

"GREAT EXPECTATIONS"

By Mike Cecere

About the best news I've seen in quite awhile was the ad in Back Yard's Feb. 15, 1999 issue announcing Heidi Herriott as OABA representative.

The Outdoor Amusement Business Association has long been in the forefront of the carnival and associated activities of showmen in the United States.

It's based on the long time determination of showpeople, who provide family oriented entertainment to millions, not to be unfairly pushed around by pressure groups and legislation that make it hard to do business.

Most importantly they've made sure that they are treated like any other American business who pay taxes and employ people. And thus, worthy of the same respect as Mobil Oil or Safeway Stores, not marginalized as a bunch of ragged gypsies. Through this unity they've

been able to work as a group to improve the way for all their members as well as other showmen.

It's a natural fit for circus people to come into the group as they have similar problems with trucking, insurance safety inspections & a myriad of other challenges touring the country entails.

And having someone from one of America's oldest circus families, Heidi Herriott, makes the entry of a large number of circus people much easier. Heidi understands that circus people are not much in the way of joining anything, but it's high time they did.

The advantages far outweigh any negative reasons, the "nay-sayers" would have. Is it going to cost a little money? You bet! But a lot less than you think it will. Whats more, if you want to keep doing what you're doing, and be part of the showbiz world, you need to get with it.

It's time to stop being victims and start being Americans with rights! There's something to think about!

***Roberta Sporrer reports Circus Gatti** has the Shrine date at the Seattle Key Arena 4/10-11. **Cirque Ingenieux** will be at the Paramount Theater 3/31-4/4. **Circus Chimera** is scheduled for their area in August at the Tacoma Mall.

***Gary Thomson reports Moscow Circus on Ice** was in Mississauga, Canada 3/13. **Circus Eloize** there 3/17, and quite expensive-\$45. Canadian dollars! The **Martin Downs Ring** held their 2nd annual display at the Forest City Wood Show in London, Ontario 2/12-14. They had 30 tables setup, with 21 members in attendance. Included in the show was a new sideshow bannerline in 1 1/2" scale modeled by Lot #7 mgr. Al Ward. The 24 ft. bannerline was hand-painted on canvas by Al & this wife Doris. Please send us a report on the circuses, Gary!

***Pete Adams** sends along some, subject to change, dates for **Clyde Beatty Circus** in his area: Gaithersburg, MD-May 3-5; Waldorf-5/6-7; Woodbridge-5/10-11; Annapolis-5/12-13; Frederick-5/14-16. Thanks, Pete.

****Nicole Wright has Canadian Circus Stamp Sets for sale at \$5.00 each, which includes shipping. They are in a block of 4, with actual circus clown faces, with drawings of elephants, bareback riders, acrobats, & big cats in the background. The word "CIRCUS" is in large bold print. Send check to Nicole Wright, RR 2, Box 85, Bloomington, IL 61704 for a set of these beautiful circus stamps. Wouldn't it be nice if the USA could make up some of the circus stamps other countries do????**

****The Bobby Gibbs "Show of Shows,"****

By Buddy Calhoun

In 1983, while I had a job that involved traveling in the states of Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Arkansas & Louisiana, I often scheduled myself to work in areas that just happened to have circuses appearing nearby.

Since I had known Franzen Bros. would be appearing in the south-of-Mobile area of Alabama, I worked that area and saw the Franzen show. While visiting Franzen, I ran into the Horton brothers who had previously presented their high wire & bear acts at the Mississippi State Fair Free Circus in October, & we decided to have a cup of coffee at a nearby restaurant.

Sitting in a booth opposite the Hortons, I was startled when they started pointing to me & whispering, "Look, look!" When I realized that they wanted me to look over my shoulder, I turned & saw a man with his head down, working busily. But, the thing that caught my eye was what the brothers wanted me to see. The man in the next booth had a cap that read, "Ford Bros. Circus." As we engaged the booking agent of Ford Bros. in a very quick conversation, we discovered that Ford Bros. was appearing in Pearl River, LA the next day.

The Hortons had a date that kept them from heading to Louisiana, but since I had customers on the Mississippi Gulf Coast that I could visit, I conveniently changed my schedule & headed toward LA.

Arriving in Pearl River-which is a small town on the Mississippi-Louisiana boundary-it was not hard to find a large, 3-ring big top sitting behind THE supermarket.

Snaked around trees, a small playground & a couple of backyards, were the midway & vehicles of Ford Bros. Wild Animal Circus. The ticket wagon was spotted in a most accessible spot, so I approached it & introduced myself. I was welcomed & told that Bobby Gibbs would be happy to show me around before showtime!

As it turns out, I guess that Bobby was the designated "greeter." And it just so happened that he was heading up the midway with a couple of loaves of bread in his hand at that very moment.

Having met Mr. Gibbs only briefly before, I really had not been exposed to this Jerry-Clower-of-the-circus-world. That did not matter one bit-Bobby was in fine form that afternoon. He brought me up to speed on the latest happenings of shows, showfolks & animals. He let me feed the chimp those loaves of bread he was carrying-casually mentioning that the chimp sometimes like finger sandwiches! He showed me the many other animals that

he was in charge of on this very impressive "second-largest" (maybe) animal circus in the world. He told of driving around the French Quarter of New Orleans in his elephant truck trying to find Interstate entrances/exits. I wondered what the drinkers thought when they saw the load of elephants going by.

After meeting Rosa's elephants, his elephants & the other show elephants, it was getting near afternoon showtime, so I excused myself to take a few photos, knowing Bobby would have to get ready for the show. He casually said something like, "Oh, yeah, did I tell you that I also ANNOUNCE the show?" Well, no, he had not! And that's where the story gets to the fun part.

I am sure that there should have been a local historian noting all the wonders of circus day in Pearl River, since that afternoon's show presented lions, horses, Bobby presenting white mules in a liberty act, a giraffe, plus a good flying act & several 3-ring displays including one which had 6 or 7 elephants, with Bobby & Rosa's group in the center. Missing from the performance were real clowns, but this circus fan probably laughed more that afternoon than at any other circus.

The comedy was actually provided by Bobby's pitches: the candy pitch, the balloon pitch & the novelty pitch were all gems of doublespeak & circus related fun that incorporated all the big names of the circus business at that time. Names like Vargas, Miller, Feld, etc., were suddenly associated with the companies that guaranteed all peanuts to have passed the Hugo elephant test, all novelties to be personally inspected & warranted to be genuine plastic made in Japan, all balloons to have been personally tested with hot air from the company owner's own mouth, all balloons guaranteed to pop when you least expected it, etc., etc.

Although I was laughing at these pitches because of the inside jokes & Bobby's references to circus people I knew, the general audience only picked up on the items being pitched, & Bobby sold a lot of stuff that afternoon. Even Bobby threw a few little goodies his own way: "Sometimes you can't tell which ONE OF US white mules is in charge of the act." Or, something like that.

After it was all out & over, I had to run to get back on schedule, but I have this very fond memory of circus day with "enhanced" announcements by Bobby in Pearl River.

In 1984, when my family & I visited England, I understood why circus folks over there whom I met asked most of all, "Do you know Bobby Gibbs???"

***Nicole Wright reports** that after the Quebec circus run, Shane and her will be retiring from performing. They have a 37' bus they are in the process of trying to sell. They are also selling their light set ups from the statue act, the fog machine & a set of the chair balancing chairs. When they return from Quebec, they will sell the trampoline. They will also sell their costumes, and also lots of "western type" costumes. They will be going into a private school-type educational show in August. They will be teaching K-5 about video, lights & green screen technology. (Keep us posted, Nicole.)

***Rev. David Tetrault, of Williamsburg, VA reports** Cathy Hanneford took over Jonathan Iverson's ringmastering job on Ringling Red in Hampton, VA. Jonathan was on vocal rest. David said he doesn't think Jonathan realized yet how demanding his job is, nor how dirty buildings can be! Cathy did a great job!

***Rev. Jerry Hogan reports** he blessed the new tent and show of "Barnum's Kaleidoscope" in Sarasota. He also did a baptism and watched 8 dress rehearsals! He left 3/9 for Toronto and the Garden Bros. Circus, then leaves for Padua, Italy and a Ecnemical Meeting. He will be back in New York 3/26 for the opening of Ringling Bros. in Madison Square Garden. (What a busy guy!!!)

***Mary Rawls reports** they have bought a house, just outside of Hugo, OK and they will not be on the road this year! Harry and Mary now have 17 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren, with a fourth on the way in June! (What a Christmas list in their family!) Bob Rawls has finished painting Kelly-Miller Circus for the coming year and is now working on Carson & Barnes Circus. (Please keep us informed of the Hugo activities, Mary!)

***The Circus Chimera newsletter** says the show will be similar to 1998, with some changes. After performing in Monte Carlo, the Flying Rodogel (Ramos family) made a commitment to tour Europe in 1999 with Circus Knie-so they will be

spending the year in Europe. The Luna Family (the twins & their wives) will be joining Chimera, presenting their flying act & aerial perch act. Everyone else will be back from 1998. Carmen Rosales will retire the mermaid hair hang-and she is being replaced by Ginger Griep Ruiz as the Little Mermaid-on a bungee cord. Ginger was injured last fall when she fell from the trapeze. It was her first public appearance of the act, & we were all crushed when she got tangled in her safety wire, fell & broke both arms. She has bounced back, is working on our winter show and she will be bouncing on the bungee every day when we open in March! Patsy Rosales will be presenting her hula hoop act. A veteran of the Moscow Circus will be the new ring boss. Ernie Miller will again be on the front gate.

***Harold Barnes** sent along a beautiful photo of the Cole Circus setting up in 1936 in Weed, Calif., for a matinee only, on the long trek to California. Willi Lamberti, of the Gretona high wire act and Harold were on a mountain alongside the lot taking photos. Willi took the picture Harold sent along. To keep busy in retirement, Harold volunteers his services to a local hospital for four hours a day, 5 days a week! He is in two departments: pricing in central supply and then medical records. It keeps him out of mischief! (I will reduce this photo and have it in the next Back Yard. I told Harold there was a photo on the E-Bay auction web site of a young man on the wire, with a lot of pretty girls standing by him, and yes, it was Harold. I don't know how much that photo went for, but Harold said he would try to find the picture and make me a copy and I will put that one in Back Yard, also. Thanks, Harold, for sharing your photos and memories!)

(*Don't forget, if any of you have any photos you might want to share with the rest of the readers, please send them to me and I will copy them and send them back. 8x10s are fine too, as I have them reduced at the print shop and they fit nicely on the picture pages. Thanks, Cherie.)

IMPORTANT AUCTION OF CIRCUS MEMORABILIA

The Lifetime Collection & Accumulation
of the Late

Louis E. Brusie
of Clifton Park, N.Y.
CFA #3158
CHS & CMB

To be held: just outside of Saratoga Springs, N.Y. (about 1 hour north of Albany, N.Y.)

When?: Saturday May 1st (& possibly Sunday May 2nd)

Preview: Thursday April 29th, Friday April 30th. Earlier by appointment

Many of you undoubtedly knew/met Louis during the 50+ years he pursued his passion for the circus world. You would also know/suspect that he was a dedicated, knowledgeable, & AVID collector of items related to circus history.

We have been commissioned by his Estate to liquidate this collection - a formidable task - we've moved 4 long bed vans CUBICALLY FILLED with ephemera & books, perhaps 3/4 of which was coherently organized.

At this point (Feb '99) I've been through about 80% of it once - this ad is not meant to be comprehensive. It IS meant to give you a taste for the breadth & depth of this collection, to encourage you to contact us in early April for more detailed listings, AND to encourage you NOW to make plans to be in beautiful and historic Saratoga Springs NY on the weekend of May 1st & 2nd (perhaps as a most pleasant detour on your way to the May 5-9th CFA convention in Ocean City, Md).

IMPORTANT NOTICE: we're a country auction house, we **DO NOT** accept absentee or telephone bids, buyers must be physically present in order to participate. **ALSO NOTE:** we sell **ABSOLUTELY UNRESERVED**...without "minimum" or "reserve" prices!

CATEGORIES: LITHOGRAPHS: over 100 pre-1955 pcs including 2 19thC rarities. **PROGRAMS:** 2 complete runs of RB & BB 1919 to present (& many extra early copies); MANY pre 1919 Barnum or Ringling programs; complete run Cole Bros 1935-50; complete run Clyde Beatty - Cole Bros '57 to present; **QUANTITY** other programs **WHITE TOPS:** mid 1920's correspondence of organizing members; many if not all 1926 issues; **AND COMPLETE RUN Vol 1 #1 to present. BANDWAGON:** including earliest 1940's (mimeographed), 40's small booklets, **AND COMPLETE RUN May/June '57 to present. LITTLE CIRCUS WAGON:** "Dedication Issue May 1964" to present. **SOUTHERN SAWDUST:** issues 35 to 101 complete. Boxes full "Circus Report".

CIRCUS LIBRARY: approx 700 hard cover volumes from 19thC to present, undoubtedly including some rarities & all the classic reference volumes

Great magazine "**COURIERS**" from 19th & early 20thC. Approx 100 fine **STREAMERS** from 19th & early 20thC (including items purchased by Louis from the Jim Hoyer collection). 15+ albums full **PHOTOS** including a few original Kelty and many taken in the 50's by Louis personally. **CORRESPONDENCE/CONTRACTS** from 1920's, 1913 Ringling Bros checks. **COMPLETE RUN RB & BB yearly ROUTE SHEETS 1919-1935 & ROUTE BOOKS**

1936 & up. Some 19thC Route Books • Weekly Route Cards • **WINDOW CARDS** • **SCRAPBOOKS** • **POSTCARDS** (incl real photo) • **NEWSPAPERS** from 1789 up - with circus content • **TICKETS GALORE** • Show Script • Pressbooks.

COWBOY/WILD WEST: 2 different 1897 "Buffalo Bill's Wild West" programs, 1905 "Pawnee Bill's Wild West" program; 1889 "4 Paw Wild West" courier w/Gen'l Custer on cover; lithographed Kit Carson poster (1930's); Tom Mix date sheet poster; 2 route books from Tom Mix Circus, various hard cover books, & more to be found.

AUDIO & VIDEO: Approx 400 circus related VCR tapes: 600+ audio cassettes & earlier audio tapes (many complete show performances) including probably the only recording of the final performance by Merle Evans in Utica, NY in 1969 (taped at the show by Louis himself).

FURTHER NOTE: it's obvious to me that Louis was a collector VERY concerned with acquiring items in FINE CONDITION. I have never seen so much ephemera in such good condition - much of it MINT by anyone's definition!

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“ELEPHANT ADVOCATES TO TESTIFY AT MARYLAND STATE CAPITOL”

3/10/99: NEWSWIRE:

On March 9, in Room 120 of the Lowes House Office Building, the House Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing on House Bill 928, the bill introduced by Delegate Rashern Baker to ban the use of live elephants and circuses and fairs in Maryland. Members of the Fund for Animals and other Maryland citizens concerned about public safety and animal welfare will testify in support of House Bill 928.

Numerous communities in the U.S., including Takoma Park, MD, Hollywood and Lauderdale Lakes, FL, Collinsville, IL and Quincy and Revere, MA have banned elephant acts.

(We hope to find out more about this. Will let you know in the next Back Yard. Those of you in Maryland, please write if you find out anything.)

“Horses of an Old Aristocracy Train Locally”

By Sara Langenberg

(Thanks to Bobby Gibbs for sending this in.)

Myakka City, Florida: Don't believe horses can fly? How about watching them dance to the Macarena?

Welcome to the training grounds of the world-famous Royal Lipizzan Stallions of Austria, located right her in little Myakka City.

Drive about 35 miles east of Bradenton and you'll find a rare taste of world history, a glimpse of equestrian strength and a proud display of Austrian heritage honed to a fine art by Lipizzan breeder Col. Ottomar Herrmann.

Herrmann and his family train about 50 of the agile white horses at a Myakka City and they've been calling home since the mid-1960s.

They spend about six months a year in training, and the rest of the year is spent traveling the world to share the graceful beauty and rich history of the rare Lipizzan breed.

Historically, the horses performed only for aristocrats or in royal battles, but thanks to the

colonel and his family, the public can watch the horses and riders in training for free every Thursday, Friday and Saturday in Myakka City.

“I do this just to see the people enjoy it,” Herrmann said in his heavy Austrian accent, after a training session before about 100 people. “It's becoming a lost art.”

A brochure available at the ranch explains that the Lipizzans are among the oldest and rarest breed of horses in the world, dating back to the Roman era, when cavalry horses in Spain were crossed with Arabians.

The breed was founded in the mid-1500s, when an Austrian archduke established his own breeding farm at Lipizza, in what is now Yugoslavia. The horses went on to become the greatest war horses in the world, and you will understand why when you see them raise their hooves for battle during any of the training sessions.

One maneuver, called “Airs Above the Ground” involves the horses rearing up with front hooves in the air, followed by a backward kick of the rear hooves. They seem to be flying.

The fall of the Lipizzan's popularity began with the onset of more advanced warfare techniques, Herrmann said, but the breed nearly reached extinction near the end of World War II, when Russia invaded Czechoslovakia and threatened to kill them all.

Herrmann credits U.S. Gen. George Patton with rescuing the breed from that fate, and to this day, Herrmann says he'll only show the horses in the Western hemisphere because there are still “too many memories” elsewhere.

“We're a family, so we start training when we are little,” Herrmann's niece, Desiree Herrmann-Fouquet, explains. “It's a lifetime experience.”

Herrmann's training sessions involve 10 riders, and eight are family members like Desiree. She said the horses are responding only to verbal commands and physical gestures, like a squeezing of the rider's legs, but you almost have to see it to believe it! (The training sessions are continuing thru 4/3/99.)

BACK YARD

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128TH EDITION RINGLING BLUE UNIT:

Wash. DC-MCI Center-3/25-3/28
Wash. DC-DC Armory-3/30-4/13
Landover, MD-US Airways Arena-4/16-18
Charleston, WV-Civic Center-4/22-25

ALL NEW 129th EDITION RED UNIT !!!!

Uniondale, NY-Nassau Coliseum-3/16-3/22
NYC-Madison Square Garden-3/26-4/11
Philadelphia, PA-1st Union Ctr-4/15-4/25
Providence, RI-Civic Center-4/28-5/2

Garden Bros. Circus: Guelph-3/16-17; Brantford-3/20-21; Winnipeg-3/30 & 4/3; St. Paul, MN-4/8-11.

UniverSoul Circus: Atlanta, GA-3/5-14; Miami-3/17-21; Jacksonville-3/24-28; Norfolk-4/9-4/18

Vidbel Circus Spring Shrine Temple Route:

Jacksonville, NC-3/17-18; Williamston, NC-3/19-22; Elkhorn City, KY-3/25; Salyersville, KY-3/26; Paintsville, KY-3/27; Portsmouth, Ohio-3/28; Ironton, OH-3/29; Inez, KY-3/30; Williamson, KY-3/31; Pikeville, KY-4/1; Morehead, KY-4/2; Ashland, KY-4/3; Altoona, PA-4/19-25.

Hamid Circus Royale: 3/18-21: Okla. City, OK; 3/26-27: Grayslake, IL; 4/5-10: Wilkes-Barre, PA; 4/7-11: Houston, TX; 4/8-11: St. Paul, MN; 4/15-18: Pasadena, TX; 4/18: Hays, KS; 4/21: Manhattan, KS.

Hanneford Shrine Circus: Pittsburgh, PA 4/9-11

Hubler Grotto Circus: Youngstown, OH 3/16-21

Jordan World Circus: Grand Rapids, MI 3/17-21

Detroit Shrine Circus: 3/12-27

Ringling Blue Unit: Grand Rapids, MI 9/22-28; Detroit, MI 10/5-10.

Famous Cole (Ron Bacon): Marysville, OH-3/20; April 8-Urbana, OH; Connersville, IN-4/18; Versailles, OH-4/20; Sidney, OH-5/7; Troy, OH-5/8; Kankakee, IL-3/24; Streator, IL-3/25; Galesburg, IL-3/26; Effingham-3/27; Lincoln-3/28; Ottawa-3/29; DeKalb, IL-3/30.

Royal American Circus: Dayton, OH-4/5-6

Hanneford Shrine Circus: Columbus, OH 4/9-18

Hanneford Shrine Circus: Dayton, OH 4/23-25

Liebel Circus: Xenia, OH-8/3-7; Zanesville-8/16-21

Clyde Beatty Circus: DeLand, FL-3/15-16; Melbourne-3/17-19; Stuart-3/20-21; Palm Bay-3/22-23; Titusville-3/24-25; Gainesville-3/26-28; Ormond Beach-3/29-30.

Circus Chimera: Imperial, CA-3/20-21

Medinah Shrine: Chicago, IL-until 3/21

Cumberland Valley Shows: Miami, FL-3/18-4/4; Eustis, FL-4/8-17; Long Island, NY-4/23-5/9; Scottsboro, AL-4/27-5/1; Dayton, TN-5/4-8; Ft. Payne, AL 5/11-15.

Reithoffer Shows: Emporia, VA-4/1-10 (Green); Palm Bay, FL-4/8-18 (Blue); Petersburg, VA-4/14-24 (Green); Hampton, VA-4/22-5/2 (Blue).

(A lot of the carnival routes are listed on OABA web site.)

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*******CIRCUS BOOKS FOR SALE*******

.....
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: Text, Very Pictorial 43.00
: "Big Top Circus," N. Johnson 12.00
: "Bertram Mills-Circus That
: Moved By Train," Jamieson 49.00

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*****NEWS FROM TEXAS*****

From Bobby Gibbs

"Stress Management": As part of my rehab I'm suppose to deal with stress by doing things I like. So, first like the doctor ordered, I went to a circus. While I'm there, I'm not 60 years old-I'm a kid again for a few hours & to top it off I get to visit part of my big 'ole circus family. On Feb. 19, Magic Circus played the National Guard Armory in Kaufman, TX with 1 performance at 7 pm. It is a Floyd Bradbury production, booked by Bryon Bowman a long time buddy of mine. Show carries its own seating, back drop, lights, carpet & concessions. 10 people move, run & perform plus live together & entertain kids & adults alike all over the USA. I must make it very plain right up front, that I enjoy smaller shows as much as the big productions-all are in the same business to entertain circus public with clean, age old skills & presentation & these guys did not fail in this. These kids from small-town America ate it up. So did their folks & showed it by their applause & laughter. No one in little Kaufman, TX expected more but all agreed when it was over a great time was had by all. I had great visits with life long friends & kept count of color books, balloons, toys & cotton candy sold to eager happy familys. The Oscar Garcia family who live here in Seagoville are about 70 % of the performance & show personel. Floyd's son is with the show & has a good magician, plenty small animals: dogs, ponies, pygmy goats & an almost human gorilla. The program consisted of: Color Book Pitch-Mr. Bradbury (at \$2.-many free prize winners); Magic by Brent Webb & Co. (8 big illusions); Clown; Fire Eating-Bryon Bauman (fast act); Miss Kathy's dogs (8 of them-a real crowd pleaser); Clown w/milk gag; Floyd Bradbury & Wally-(Vent.-real funny); Goat act-Bryon's Kids (2 pygmy goats, with Kid toys, slides, cars. Bryon loves his animals & it shows); Balloon Pitch; Juggling-Aaron Duo (Oscar & Kathy); Clown (Bigger Bigger); Reinces Duo-cradle (Oscar & daughter Reina Garcia); Minature horse-"Thunderball" (Bryon); Clown Hula Hoops; Gerilla act (Garcia family). "Come on, get healthy-See a circus. Man, I love it!

The annual K.C. Police Circus was held Feb. 27. George Hubler again produced the show. Business was good for both shows. Concessions were handled by John Osher, of Ohio; Walt Patterson, prop boss. Program: 6 tigers with Shane Johnson; Geraldos Cradle; Wendy Patterson Table; K.C. Jugglers; Wheel with Dominick Bauer;

Wendy Plunkett Patterson-Aerial Rings; Clyde Bros. elephants; Geraldos with Cycle/Globe.

(Bobby sent along an announcement from James and Cristine Herriott Plunkett introducing their baby boy, born Feb. 12 in Athens, TX. Congratulations!!)

Bobby says, "I'm still on the mend, hope to return to work soon. Your mail has been real helpful in my recovery, prayers & good wishes. John Pelton & Gatti elephants were here on their way thru to East Texas dates. Tammy Wallenda has taken over the 2nd cat act, formerly worked by Wilson Barnes & she will be on Jordan show. If I'm OK, I will go to K.C. and drive the elephants up to Hubler date to help Shane out. Help is hard to get. Rosa went thru stomach flu, but is better now. Sad to hear of loss of Alphonso Loyal, he was a real good man. Betty Bartholomew has made me this great letterhead! Still going to Baylor Hospital for rehab. Well, I get real tired so I'd better go for now. Remember, your friendship really means a lot to us. Hope to see you down the road. Your Friends, Bobby and Rosa.

(You can write them at: POB 626, Seagoville, TX 75159; Ph. 972-287-4992)

****New York City Mayor Issues Proclamation!****

2/23/99: New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani was joined by RBBB 129th Edition Ringmaster Johnathan Iverson and several members of Clown Alley as he issued the following proclamation:

"Whereas: The youngest Ringmaster in history and the first New Yorker, Johnathan Lee Iverson, blows his whistle on 3/26 to open the 129th Edition of The Greatest Show on Earth at Madison Square Garden. Also celebrated this year is the 80th Anniversary of the first performance of the combined RBBB, on March 29, 1919; and Whereas: The world's favorite circus began in 1870 with showman P.T. Barnum's Great Traveling Museum, which performed in a tent in Brooklyn, Barnum combined with James Bailey's Great London Circus in 1881, and a year later, the beloved Jumbo made his debut at the first Madison Square Garden. Johnathan Iverson was a former member of the Boys Choir of Harlem & graduate of Fiorello LaGuardia High School. The Mayor proclaimed March 26 to April 11 in the City of New York as "Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Days!"

****TOP GUNS By Mike Cecere****

In the world of Feld Entertainment, home of some of the elephant businesses finest minds, it's hard for anyone to stand out. But, like the U.S. Navy fighter pilots, there are a few "Top Guns."

These dedicated men are Jim Williams & Gary Jacobson. These fellows are among the top elephant men of my generation and good friends of mine. Both highly experienced & totally dedicated to the great beasts, they have teamed up to do incredible things in a show of teamwork that is the envy of major zoos worldwide.

They head up the Feld Entertainment's RBBB Center For Elephant Conservation in Florida. With the generous backing of Feld Entertainment, they carry on the dreams of our mutual friend, the late Ted Svertesky, another elephant top gun and Mr. Irvin Feld, one of the greatest showmen of all time.

Jim Williams is the general manager of the huge herd of breeding Asian elephants in a 24 hour, 7 day a week effort that has produced many healthy baby elephants and top care for all the huge creatures.

Gary Jacobson, who history will prove out to be one of the Greats of Elephant Training, heads up Feld Entertainment's Elephant Training Program with the awesome responsibility of bringing the training of the baby and young elephants along within his high standards.

Combined with the excellent Feld Entertainment veterinary staff, these fellows along with their highly trained crew, make the elephant's life the best it can be and ensure the survival of the species which has virtually no homeland left in the Asian continent due to overpopulation of humans.

The future of elephants depend on men like Jim Williams and Gary Jacobson, the rest of the Feld elephant professionals & people like them who give to the elephants first, as is our tradition. But, it's good to recognize hard work by people like Jim and Gary, the Elephant Industry's TOP GUNS! Good job, guys!

"RINGLING BROS. PRESENTS BARNUM'S KALEIDOSCAPE" *3/3/99: Vienna, VA

Feld Entertainment, the parent company of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey®, will premiere a multi-million-dollar tented circus extravaganza called BARNUM'S KALEIDOSCAPE on April 30 in L.A., it was announced today by Kenneth Feld. Combining the intimacy of contemporary theatre with the excitement of

a classic circus, BARNUM'S KALEIDOSCAPE creates America's newest entertainment experience-2 hours of up-close, intimate & unabashed fun! The experience unfolds under the spires of a dazzling red-and-white circus tent, featuring David Larible, the World's Most Loveable Clown & 1999 winner of the International Circus Festival of Monte Carlo Golden Clown Award, in the most luxurious & intimate setting imaginable.

Presented by Ringling Bros., Kaleidoscape represents the first time a Ringling Bros. production has been presented in a tent since 1956. But nothing in the 1950s could equal the luxury & comfort of Kaleidoscape's 1,850 plush velvet "ribside" seats, including exclusive sofa seating for the ultimate viewing pleasure.

Feld said, "By the final fanfare, the audience will feel they've known the performers all their lives." Joining David Larible is an international array of superb artists who were hand-selected by Kenneth Feld not only for their amazing skills, but also for their incredible live performance talents: Pipo, a classic European harlequin; Sylvia Zerbinì, circus diva from one of circusdom's classic families; Picasso, Jr., a juggling maestro from Italy who makes every performance a living work of art; Nuts 'n' Bolts, the British comic quintet who prove that life only gets funnier as we get older; Sahara Statues, who bring a classic circus artform to life; plus a virtual cornucopia of surprises.

The 2-hour production is enhanced by a live orchestra, an original musical score, dramatic atmospheric lighting, hand-crafted designer sets & striking costumes; plus patrons will enjoy the fine taste of gourmet cuisine to round out the evening's experience.

"Barnum's Kaleidoscape" begins previews on April 7th at Irvine Meadows in Irvine, CA. Its world premiere will be April 30 in Century City in L.A. The show will then tour for approximately 50 weeks across the country, with plans for an upcoming international tour. (Reprinted with permission of Ringling Bros. Circus. Please visit their web site at www.ringling.com for this & other articles.)

BACK YARD CORRECTION: The correct name for the Eastern Division Agent for the Animal Awareness Committee of the CFA is Gordon Turner, 1 Kenmore Ave., Woodlawn Estates, Schenectady, NY 12304. (Sorry for the confusion of Turner and Taylor! And you two live so close together, too! Cherie.)

RUMBLINGS FROM THE CRUMMY

By Brian Nunn

*The magic of making them believe what they don't know; as in teaching them an interesting way to think about things, they never thought of before. What this has to do with magicians, illusionists or animal trainers? I don't know.

*Gardner as a comedian. This 10,000 pound bull elephant would stand and rule his barn with the exception of Rex Williams. All us hands would be working in the barn, making props, bull tubs, bull hooks, washing laundry in barrels, and so on.

Well, in the middle of the night, I'm sleeping on hay bales. I'm woke up by the sound of some one hacksawing through metal, or hammering wood. One time it was the sound of a helicopter. I'm sorry but this bull elephant could even mimic the sound pressures, along with the beating sounds.

Frank and Tom Thompson were there, along with other well-known elephant men.

Animal activists beware!! "Here we are in a barn full of elephants and horses, a few goats and chickens, some seasoned elephant men...nuff said!!!" 2 a.m.: the world is peaceful and quiet, when all of a sudden the sound; and the imposing beat of a helicopter wakes you up only to find it's Gardner, down at his end of the barn, making noises.

Lots and lots of elephants figure a way to entertain themselves. Some more inventive than others. There's the able kind, that can un-do knots, locks, gate latches-you name it. They will frustrate you, antagonize and make you a lot crazier than you want to be.

They're smarter than you are. Give them time and they will do things like: count the chips of bark on a stump and remember it better than you. If you want to learn to get along with elephants, you've got to figure out they're smarter than you are.

There's been some that find an inanimate object to make friends with, like a truck tire, or a small wrench, or object.

They find it precious and would like to keep it with them at all times and at all costs. But, unfortunately, a lead elephant doesn't look good running into the performance ring with a 150 pound truck tire carried in her trunk. So, kind of, you've got to, talk her into leaving it outside in order to do work. And that it will be there when she comes out after work, safe and sound.

I found it amazing how much some of these elephants put

importance on (what we, as humans felt was unnecessary) and thought was very important. One elephant I knew, liked to have, (what she thought) was the same rock with her all the time; she protected it like it was worth her life. She turned difficult if she missed her rock, or some phony had replaced it.

It was just one of the things you had to read into the job. I suppose it's one of the reasons I loved the work.

RINGLING MOURNS LOSS OF POLISH ARABIAN HORSE-2/23/99: Norfolk, VA.

Ringling Bros. Circus is mourning the loss of Sabre, a 15-year-old Polish Arabian gelding. The horse collapsed late on Monday while the animals were being moved from the Norfolk rail station to the Norfolk Scope Arena.

A necropsy, or animal autopsy, will be conducted & findings will be available upon its completion.

Sabre was part of what is known as a "liberty act" presented by Catherine Hanneford, one of the nation's top equestriennes. Catherine joined Ringling Bros. in late 1998 and is a 7th-generation circus professional & animal trainer. (From www.ringling.com)

VIVA KNIEVEL By Mike Cecere

I've got to echo the praise for super showbiz legend Evel Knievel by my good friend, Ken "Turtle" Benson. To those of us who came up in the 60s and 70s, Evel Knievel was a real live American hero.

A relentless self-promoter, Evel was a household name with his exploits.

A master of public relations, he had a flair that would rival that of the great P.T. Barnum himself and has kept him in the headlines to this day.

Recently, his son, Capt. Robie Knievel, carrying on the family tradition, jumped a motorcycle from the roof of one Casino to another in downtown Las Vegas, on live TV!

And Evel's latest exploit selflessly giving up a donor organ to another man proves he is a real showman in our best traditions.

Of course, it takes one to know one, as Ken "Turtle" Benson is cut out of the same cloth.

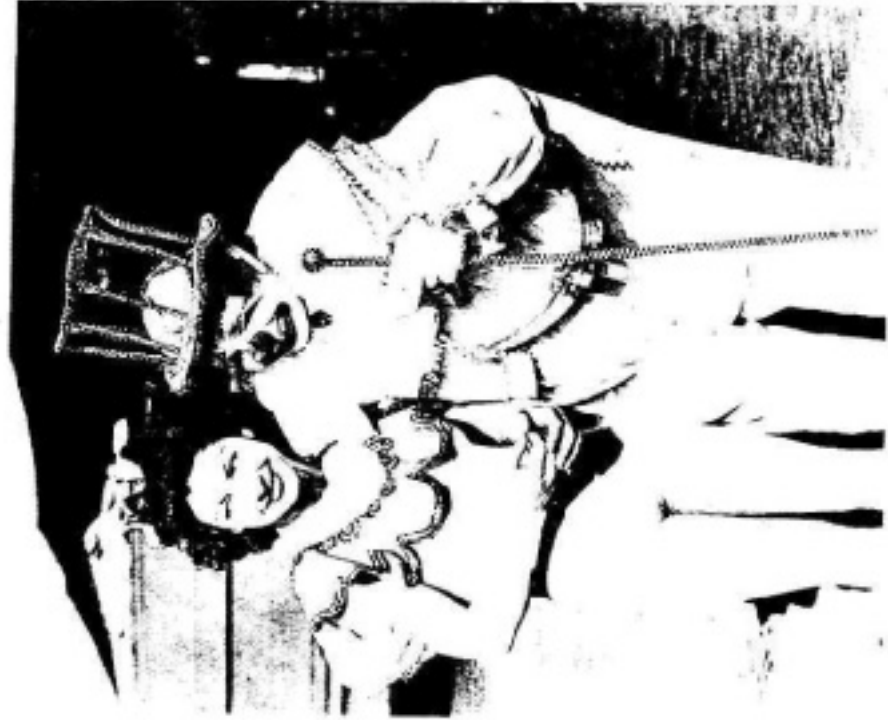
Thanks for reminding us, Ken!



One Week Old
Baby "Ganusa"
& Mother



Carl



**Antoinette Concello and
Felix Adler**