

BACK YARD

Volume V, Issue #87

March 15, 2000

"GRAB IT" By Earl Chapin May
ISU Circus Archives
(The American Magazine, 1928)

Eddie Ward, of Bloomington, Illinois, speaks about his trapeze career! "If aerialists can't stand the monotony of this gymnasium practice, or if they balk or weaken on this work they're out, as far as I'm concerned. But it would surprise you to see the number of boys & girls who will go thru this tedious practice just to be tested in the flyer's rig. This rig consists of a pair of jumpers, for each girl, regular gym clothes for the boys, plus a mechanic. A mechanic is a safety belt around the pupil's waist, which belt is swiveled to a half-inch safety rope running over a pulley in the roof of the barn. In the old days, when I was broken into the flying game, the pupil, or 'punk,' to use a professional term, did his first net

falling and flying without any kind of safety appliance. His boss gave him plenty of good advice; but after that, the pupil took his chances with the veterans. He got his first lesson in ground work by turning a back somersault with the upturned teeth of a garden rake just back of where he was supposed to land. He had to alight on the spot he left. Consequently, he turned his somersaults pretty close. When he began to fly he was just as careful not to make mistakes. We are easier with our 'punks' now. Every flyer in my company learned his complete routine, including the double aerial somersault, with a safety belt around his waist. I held the other end of the safety rope, if I wasn't catching him. If I was catching, one of my heavier assistants held the rope. If the flyer missed a trick, the safety rope saved him from a fall.

(Continued on Page 4)



1935



Feb. Bros 1946 Denver



The Engfords

Ruthie Clark

Ruthie
Clark

Tiger, Tiger Burns Bright No More

By Mike Cecere

The news came to me in the morning bulletin, "Sita," was dead. She was the most photographed wild tiger, star of many a wildlife film and magazine covers. A representative of natural beauty, she was struck down in the prime of life by a heartless poacher for a few dollars he would get for the pelt.

Sure, that's the opinion of someone who, tho he works hard, still has a better life than most Indians. I accept that criticism. And I applaud the special police unit that is trying to curb the epidemic of poaching in that poverty stricken nation. They are a brave and dedicated group of people that realize they need to stop the destruction of the natural world around them before it's too late.

They learned a lesson from the way we nearly destroyed the Buffalo and other native species as well as wild places, a fight that continues here in the U.S. today. Ironically, there are probably more tigers here in North America than the whole of Indian sub-continent.

"Sita" roamed in the area of Bandhavgarh in the state of madhya Pradesh, one of the most beautiful areas of India. There, she raised litters of cubs and kept the delicate balance of nature in her role as a predator. As a wild animal trainer for many, many years, I forged a deep abiding love and respect for the great cats and despite having them in captivity, always felt they were ambassadors for their wild cousins.

True to form, many people saw their first tiger in a wildlife park or circus which helped some to gain a passion towards saving them in the wild. And truly, despite much ballyhoo and press agentry, they are only endangered in the wilds of India, Siberia and the scant other places where tigers once roamed.

When I was a boy and starting in the business, you could still buy Sumatran, Bali and Indo-Chinese tigers. Now we have only Bengals and Siberians with very few being pure blood. In fact, that's a sad statistic in America, that most tigers are crossbred particularly the ones in the exotic pet trade. Then, there are the manufactured tigers, like the white tigers. Well-cared for and abundant especially in the entertainment business, they are no way, shape or form, endangered, as they only exist in captivity. In fact, I saw on the Jack Hanna Show, a facility where they had 55 tigers, mostly cast off pets and nearly 20 of them were white tigers.

But soon, if more incidents like the poaching of "Sita" occur, circuses and zoos will be the only place left to see

tigers. And tho they will be protected and cared for, it will be a sad day when there is no wild left for tigers to roam free. God Bless America.

News From Our Circus Friends

Ruthie Engford Clark writes, "Enjoyed seeing the photo of your mom and Sue in the last issue. I sure remember the act those two did together! And I sure remember the big barn in Bloomington. Your mom was very helpful to me when I was practicing for aerial work-she showed me many things-and, the correct way to recover a web or trap ropes! All in that barn! (Thanks, Ruthie, for the memories of Mom. It is nice to know that others learned from her too! I will have a slide presentation at the Circus Historical Society Convention in September that will show photos of her and Dad and Sue, doing what they did best!)

While searching E-Bay for circus items, I came across a sideshow photo. The seller had this to say about a person that had commented on the photo: "Hi, I wanted to let you know, that in the center of the photo, are my parents, **Jeanie & Al Tomaini**. Going by the "Tux," that my Dad is wearing, it would have been in 1936, that was the year they married in Ripley, NY. And he was known as the "Playboy Giant" which was changed to the "American Giant" when Mother came on the scene.

Mother was 2' 6" and she was the world's only living half-girl, born without legs. She was featured on the Learning Channel's 2 hour special "Sideshow, Alive on the Inside." She was also on the cover of James Taylor's "Shocked & Amazed, Volume 2." She and my Dad were billed as the World's Strangest Married Couple and she continued to work until her death, at our trailer park, The Giant's Camp, in Gibsonton, Florida. She died on Aug. 10, 1999 and with her, one of the greatest freaks, of all time, left this earth. R.I.P., Rustie Rock.

The Bert Backstein & Don Erlenbush Ring No. 72 will hold a Lot Gathering May 19-20 in Arcola, Illinois at Rockome Gardens. This gathering will be open to any and all CMB exhibitors. For more information, contact Bill Shane, Ringmaster, 1202 Lincoln Ave, Ottawa, IL 61350 or Ron Hurst, 1404 Park Ave, Pekin, IL 61554.

"GRAB IT".....

"That sort of training gives the beginners confidence," said Eddie Ward. "You take healthy boys and girls of 17 and make them believe they cannot fall, then take them into a big top jammed with towners, the circus band playing like all get out, and the towners applauding every trick, and first-season flyers may lose their heads. They are likely to have their minds on hurrying back to the perch so they can take their bows, whereas the important thing with all of us is to climb into the rigging, go thru with the act and forget there is such a thing as an audience. The time for a flyer to think of the audience is when the act is over and he is on the ground.

That's true of almost any line of work. Sometimes it is hard to teach my flyers this. 'You're from 20 to 40 feet in the air.' I keep warning them. 'You keep your mind on your work and on me. The safety net is your only life insurance and that won't save you if you hit it wrong. The first time you may think of or see your audience is when the act is over.'

I joined out a girl from Peoria in 1922. She was young and slender and strong enough and she went thru the preliminary work so well that I put her into the regular act in 1924. That was pretty short training for a flying act. It takes about 4 years to make a professional flyer out of anyone. But she was naturally a graceful girl and unusually quick, mentally and physically. Flying and somersaulting seemed to come natural to her. Moreover, she had plenty of nerve.

But she couldn't get her mind off her audience. She had good looks and knew how to sell herself, so she was always in a hurry to get back to her perch and take her bow. Finally, she got to looking sidewise at her audience as she swung toward me on her bar. That made a great impression on the audience, but it didn't make a hit with me. 'You'll get hurt if you don't keep your mind on your business,' I warned her after we had been performing under the canvas a week or so. 'It's me and not the audience that's catching you.'

But she wouldn't take my warning seriously. One day at Binghamton, NY, she was trying to do a double cutaway. That's a trick that needs concentration. But she was thinking of her audience. She didn't come within a yard of me. Luckily, she struck on her shoulders in the net but the accident frightened her. She watched and listened to me after that. You mustn't think, because of this anecdote, that girls are more difficult than boys to handle in a flying act. If anything, girls are steadier. They work

right thru from spring to fall, in rain or snow or stifling heat. Girls can catch as well as men, too. Most of my company can catch as well as fly.

A flyer, as I have pointed out, is almost literally in the catcher's hands. He or she merely has to obey orders. It is the catcher who completes the trick. So, while a flyer has to have the daring, a catcher must have a judgment and make decisions almost automatically. A catcher who has done nothing else but catch is used to swinging head downward on a swaying trapeze, timing his swing with the flyer's swing and trying to be at the proper spot when the flyer comes toward him at 40 miles an hour.

If the flyer has not left his perch properly, or, after leaving the perch, lets go his trapeze bar too late or too soon, the catcher has either to revise his calculations or manage to guide the falling body he cannot catch. I always try to train my company to do double duty, because I never know when someone will be out of the act thru injury. I don't count sickness, because we never have that in my company. No one ever lays off because he isn't feeling well. But accidents are unavoidable as long as human beings are what they are; and because I train my flyers to be catchers as well I've proved that catching has nothing to do with weight.

In the early days of flying-return acts it was assumed that one must be extra strong and heavy to seize and hold a flying body. I exploded that theory long ago. I weigh 175 pounds. My star flyers are my wife, Mayme, who weighs 132; Bert, who weighs 138 and Harold, who weighs 125. But Mickey Ward, who weighs less than a hundred pounds and who began her professional life as a flyer, is now catching in the act. She can even catch me without straining her shoulders or arms. How is it done?

That's one of the tricks in our peculiar trade. Part of the explanation is that I 'take up' as I catch hold. My arms are not extended at full length. As our hands meet, I gradually straighten out my arms. Of course, on the return swing, she holds my dead weight in her hands, but it never seems to bother her. Once a flyer has had a season on the road he generally becomes a confirmed trouper. During the first 6 days he may try his best to get out of it-may beg me to cancel his contract. But I haven't had a first-season performer actually quit, not in many, many years-even after a long spell of rain & mud. Each performer's wardrobe must go into one small trunk. That trunk has its regular place in the ladies' or the gentlemen's dressing room. It is never more than 3' from another performer's wardrobe trunk. **(To Be Continued)**

The Daring Young Lady on the Flying Trapeze

By Carol Moore

La Terasita, now in the center ring for her final performance here on Earth. For a straw house full of family and friends before she rejoins her famous family and loving husband in our Lord's Big Top in Heaven.

Born Teresa Marie Morales, March 28, 1913, in Chicago, Illinois, and the youngest and last of the original Morales troupe of performers who came to the United States from Mexico at the turn of the 20th Century.

The famous troupe consisted of father and mother, Martin and Conchita, who did a trampoline and bar act. Felix, Sr., who did a death defying head slide, head balancing traps and trampoline act with his wife, Iva, and family; Pieta, who hung by her hair; Concha, who did iron jaw and later a balancing act with her husband, Carl and the Ericksons; Lola, who also hung by her hair and later had one of the first traveling silent movie theaters with her husband, Tony Lamb, a circus band trombone player; Pedro, Sr., who did a slide for life on foot and later a comedy balancing act with his son and wife, Roberta...

...and then there was Teresa, who according to her Brother Felix, was the most athletic member of the family. Her Trapeze act was a combination of twists and turns that resulted in her hanging by her heels while swinging high over the crowds below. Only recently have other artists been doing her more difficult tricks.

Though she was petite, she was strong, which was obvious as she climbed hand over hand up her web to her trapeze bar. Never using a net made her act much riskier and a resulting fall left her in a coma for weeks. But her strength and determination showed as she was soon in the air again. Teresa met her husband, C.J. Matchett, a concessionaire on Polack Brother's Circus and their marriage in 1943 resulted in three daughters; Cathy, Juanita and Vicky.

Teresa was a star in the big top, but at home, she was the loving mother who always put her children first. In later years, when off the road, Teresa and Matchett made their family their main interest and both were proud of their girls, their husbands and later, their grandchildren.

Teresa never forced any of her girls to perform but all did for a short time. And each was able to find their own niche in life thanks to parents that were always supportive Teresa was always active in her girl's lives,

but always behind the scenes, driving them to events, classes and school or putting on birthday parties with special themes. Selfish she wasn't. A loving mother and wife she was and a star she will always be. Even in her last days in the Critical Care Unit, she had doctors and nurses applauding her strength and determination to beat her illness. But time and age won out this time and Teresa's star passed from earth to heaven, January 29, 2000, taking her into the 21st Century and spanning the history of the original Morales family troupe through 100 years and six generations, leaving a legacy for their children to remember and be proud of. For they are part of a talented, proud, strong people who lived in a time that will never be again, except in our hearts. And in history there will always be the Daring Young Lady on the Flying Trapeze. (Thanks, Carol. I will look forward to printing some photos of your mom and family when you have the time to send some.)

News From Our Circus Friends

Paul Butler, Strathroy, Ontario writes Skoadles, a dromedary (one hump) camel, was born February 5 at the Bowmanville Zoo in the snow. It took three hours to warm her up. Michael Hackenberger is in charge of the animals and has several elephants he leases to circuses that play Ontario. This was the first camel to be born in some 20 years at the Zoo.

Harrison Sayre writes "The Erma & Rudy Rudynoff Tent 127 recently sponsored the Royal Palace Circus at dates at Dundalk, Parkville and Pikesville, MD. At Pikesville, a lunch was provided for the show personnel by the Tent.

The Maryland State Legislature has before it HB1030, which will ban all elephants from any show in the state. The bill is introduced by 2 Representatives and is coming up for a hearing 3/14. Ringling is sending a representative and a number of CFA members from the Rudynoff Tent will attend." Harrison will let us know what happens at the hearing. Thanks, Harrison.

Don Sandman writes Ringling Red just signed to play the Nutter Center in Dayton, Ohio May 10-14.

CFA Convention April 11-15 Sarasota FL. Be There!

Passing Of Our Circus Friends

John Bantock, 67, of Sarasota, Florida, passed away February 28. John was born December 13, 1932 in Brighton, England. John moved to Sarasota 24 years ago from New York City. John was a member of Showfolks of Sarasota and the International Paperweight Society. He owned a bookstore in Sarasota and sold many hard-to-get and special-priced circus books to fans and performers alike. He leaves behind his brother, Peter, in England and his son, Richard, in Florida. I, for one, will remember John for his great sense of humor and his very caring ways. He not only touched the lives of people in America, but also sold circus books to people all over the world. Among his best friends, were Bob and Gail Blackmar of North Carolina. Together, they produced "Freaks" magazine. Rest in peace, my very special friend.

(**Jim Royal of Carson & Barnes Circus** remembers that while he was in England, he & John corresponded and John was his source for books. "I finally met him in Sarasota at his store, about 1993. He was a fine man.)

Jane Nida writes "After "fighting a good fight" for more than 1 1/2 years **Dow** died at 9p.m. Thursday, March 2nd, at the VA Hospital in Washington, D.C. On Wed. afternoon I was summoned to the VA Medical Center attached to the Hospital when Dow collapsed after his dialysis was given. He was rushed to the ICU in the Hospital where Katie (our middle grandchild) and I arrived mid-afternoon on Wednesday and stayed at his side until 9 p.m. Thursday. The Staff allowed us to stay there all the time with him. He went peacefully and literally everyone, the many wonderful Army Chaplains and staff gave tribute to his outstanding FAITH. He has certainly "fought the good fight" and contributed so much in his life. Our 53+ years together and his love and concern for our 3 outstanding grandchildren and Bob, our ever loving concerned son-in-law have given us so much for which to thank our God.

Our loss of our Janice (our daughter) 3 years ago, I personally feel contributed to Dow's difficulty in coping with his physical difficulties (his diabetes and heart problems). With the help of our family and our dear friends I will thank God for taking care of us and giving Dow to us. He has left a fine heritage!

Bob Kitchen writes "Ernie Brunette passed away in New Bedford, Massachusetts on March 4. He was a long-time circus fan. Ernie was a member of the CFA for 55 years and was also a member of the Father Edward Sullivan Tent since its inception.

John Hahn writes The Circus City Festival runs from July 16-22 in Peru, Indiana. The show features some 230 kids, age 7-21. The circus is presented in the newly air-conditioned 3 ring permanent big top. Folks can visit their web site at www.perucircus.com. While in town, fans can also visit the Circus Hall of Fame.

Earl Krauzer attended the season opening of the **Clyde Beatty Circus**. He said **Cap Logan** was present, wearing a tux, during the elephant act. Freddie's daughter, **Omi**, was selling tickets for the elephant rides during intermission. Circus fans along the Beatty route will once again have the pleasure of visiting with the Logan family. Please give my best wishes to Freddie & Omi when you visit. I was looking forward to seeing Freddie at the CFA Convention in Sarasota. I had a great time visiting with him when he was here with **Circus Pages**. I brought out my elephant photo albums and he commented and named the old photos, not just the people, but also the elephant's names. What a wealth of circus and elephant memories! I hope some of you get to visit with him and Omi this season.

Linda Rosaire Repasy wrote that **Daviso Cristiani's** 92nd birthday would be celebrated on March 5th and friends, family and Circus Fans were invited to attend and help him celebrate. I decided to send a plant arrangement, so asked my florist to try to find a horse planter to put them in. Well, this wasn't an easy task as she called about 10 florists in Sarasota and there were none to be found! Hope everyone had a great time.

RINGLING RED: Washington, D.C.-MCI Ctr: 3/23-26;
Washington DC-DC Armory: 3/28-4/9

RINGLING BLUE: NYC-Madison Sq. Garden: 3/16-4/2; Knoxville-Civic Coliseum: 4/6-9; Providence-Civic Center: 4/26-30; New Haven-Coliseum: 5/3-7; Hartford-Civ Ctr: 5/10-14.

BIG APPLE CIRCUS: Somerset County, NJ-Patriots Park: 3/11-26; Boston-Fan Pier: 4/1-5/7; Queens, NY-Cunningham Park: 5/11-5/21; Brookville, NY-Long Island Univ.: 5/26-6/4; Chicago-Arlington Intl: 6/10-25

Big Apple OOPS!: West Point-3/17-18; Stamford, CT-Palace: 3/21/26; Baltimore-Lyric Opera House: 3/28-4/2; Syracuse-4/4; Binghamton, NY-Forum Theatre: 4/5-6; Wallingford, CT-Oakdale Theatre: 4/7-9; State College, PA: 4/11-12; East Lansing, MI-Wharton Ctr: 4/14-16.

Barnum's Kaleidoscope: Chicago-3/29-4/30.

Carson & Barnes: Paris, TX-3/18; Bonham-3/19; Denison-3/20; The Colony-3/21; Allen-3/22; Denton-3/23-24; Garland-3/26-27; Waxahachie-3/28.

Royal Hanneford: E. Lansing MI-Breslin Ctr: 3/17-19

Sterling-Reid Circus: Waterloo, IA-McElroy Audit: 3/15-16; Normal, IL-ISU Arena: 3/18; Springfield, IL: 3/19; St. Charles, MO-Family Arena: 3/20-21; Cape Girardeau-Show-Me-Ctr: 3/22; Poplar Bluff-Coliseum: 3/23; Little Rock-Barton Colis: 3/24-25; Alexandria, LA-Rapides Colis: 3/26; Baton Rouge-Memorial Stad: 3/27-28; New Orleans-Marconi Meadow Park: 3/30-4/2; Lafayette-Evangeline Downs: 4/3-4; Beaumont, TX-Airport: 4/5-7; Galveston-Airport: 4/8-9.

Royal American Circus: Dayton-Fairgrounds: 4/4-5

Hanneford Shrine Circus: Columbus, OH-3/24-4/2

Chinese Acrobats: Wilmington, OH-Murphy Theatre: 4/1

Dayton Shrine: Univ. of Dayton Arena: 4/7-9

UniverSoul Circus: Cleveland: 5/24-28; Columbus: 5/31-6/4; Cincinnati: 6/7-11; Indianapolis: 6/12-16

Carson & Barnes Circus: Newark, OH: 8/17; Yellow Springs: 8/18-19; Englewood: 8/20

Circus World Museum: Opens May 6-Baraboo, WI

Circus Hollywood-Atlanta, GA: 5/5-14-Yaarab Shrine

Circus Gatti: Portland, WA-3/18-19; Eugene-3/20-22; Salem-3/24-26; Yakima-3/28.

BACK YARD

is published twice monthly-(15th & 30th) by Cherie Valentine, 1522 Clinton Blvd., Bloomington, IL 61701.

Phone: 309-828-0737. FAX: 309-438-5607. E-mail: cdvalen@ilstu.edu. Subscription rates are \$30.00 per year, for 24 issues, within the USA. Advertising rates, payable in advance, with your copy, are: Full page \$30; Half page \$15; Quarter Page \$10; 1/8 page \$5. "The Fox," is written by Jenny Wallenda. Other material is written by Cherie Valentine, unless otherwise identified as to author. Comments by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher. Back Yard is a pro-circus, pro-animal publication, which supports the use of animals which are legally held and properly cared for, in the American circus.

News From The Emmett Kelly Tent: Kelly-Miller and Bentley Bros Circuses personnel can look forward to coffee, juice and donuts when they play Hagerstown! The Banquet will be Oct. 14 and Father Jerry Hogan has been asked to be the guest speaker! Say yes, Father Hogan! The food sounds great-including stuffed chicken breast, ham steak and perhaps, crab imperial! Included are baked potato, mixed vegetables, fruit cup and ice cream. Sounds like a great dinner to me!

Dave Orr gave a detailed report at the meeting on his fight against HR2929. He has accumulated over 4200 signatures on his petition and is lobbying his State Representative to vote against the Bill. He announced Ringling will be parading during a change of venue from the MCI Center to the DC Armory on March 27. He is also working on convincing the National CFA to set up a scholarship program which could be used as a tool to attract younger members. Door prizes were provided by Dave and Heidi Herriott. President Ed Meals shared his activities on countering the activities of animal rights protestors. Prayers go out to Jane Nida on the passing of her husband, member, Dow Nida.

2000 CARSON & BARNES Order Form 2000

(Please circle colors & sizes)	Price	Ordered	Total
"Run Away with the Carson & Barnes Circus" video	\$ 14.95		
"Elephants & Cherry Pie" video	12.95		
"Have you met our 4 legged family?" (20 minute) video	9.95		
Mesh Baseball Cap - Black, Red, Blue, or Gray	5.75		
Low Profile Baseball Caps with embroidered Carson & Barnes Logo- various solid & two-tone colors	12.00		
T-Shirts: Blue Tiger, Yellow Tiger, Elephant, Chinese, (Limited sizes available), or Lion's Pride:			
Children's sizes 2-4, 6-8, 10-12	12.00		
Adult sizes: S,M, & L	14.00		
XL & XXL	16.00		
"I Love Carson & Barnes 5-Ring Circus" Buttons	1.00 EA		
Polo Shirt with embroidered Carson & Barnes Logo; Colors Royal, Red, Black, Burgundy, Forest Green, White, Grey, Teal, or Navy. Sizes M, L XL, XXL	21.95		
Assorted Carson & Barnes Poster Pack-3 Posters (Assorted)	9.95		
Order your 1999 Route Book NOW-Available NOW	15.00		
LICENSE PLATES by Gilli Graphics (Beautiful)	12.00		
<i>A Circus Girl's Cookbook</i> by Sarah Chapman	10.00		
2000 Carson & Barnes Appointment Book	3.00		
Carson & Barnes Logo Pennants (3 styles) Blue with Tiger; Green with Basketball Bears; Gold with Elephant	5.00 EA		
2000 Route Cards (Mailed During 2000 Season)	24.95		
	Shipping & Handling		\$5.00
	Total		

M/C or Visa Accepted: Card # _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature _____

Ship to: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____



Minimum Order \$ 10.00. Overseas Orders add 30% for Extra Freight. Canadian Orders add 10% for Extra Freight. All orders in US Currency - Sorry No C.O.D's. Checks should be made payable to CARSON & BARNES CIRCUS. Mail orders to: Carson & Barnes Circus, PO Box 10, Hugo, OK 74743

The Endangered Ark Foundation was established to acquire property, facilities and animals to preserve and protect endangered animals, such as elephants, tigers, etc. We have established an Elephant Breeding Facility and are working on an Animal Park in Hugo, Oklahoma. Contributions are tax deductible. We endeavor to spend as much as possible directly on species preservation. If you would like to support this work, send your contribution to: The Endangered Ark Foundation, PO Box 306, Hugo, OK 74743.

PLEASE MAKE A SEPARATE CHECK OUT TO THE ENDANGERED ARK FOUNDATION. DO NOT INCLUDE THE DONATION AS PART OF A CHECK MADE OUT TO CARSON & BARNES CIRCUS.

I would like to contribute: \$ _____ to the Endangered Ark Foundation, a non-profit foundation established to help save Endangered Animals through positive action - not negative reaction.

Name: _____ Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Telephone: _____



RUMBLINGS FROM THE CRUMMY

By Brian Nunn

*Jellybeans, Me and Flora. The elephant had to make 5 appearances in the show. Circus Flora, so she & I spent a lot of time hanging out around by the back door, we had a lot of dings goin' on, so I'd toss different size sticks and twigs on the ground. I'd let her know which ones I wanted with a yes or no. She got good and paid attention (yes...I used jellybeans).

Anyway, she learned to pick out of the pile in front of her. Then place about 2 or 3 feet farther in front, left to right, 4 spots, 2 sticks per spot-like dealing cards. She dealt out 4 hands, 2 cards each (I made the props). She took discards, handed out another. The actors at the table didn't have to do anything but take cards. Each time the third actor won the hand, Flora would give her a chip.

Flora won the rest. At this point, the trick was too long and slow, so I just had her sweep the winnings toward her, cards & all the chips, usually most of them would land on the floor. The elephant as real good about all this. She'd sit on a bull tub and deal the props on a tub in front of her. She even put up with wearing a Big visor I made out of copper ground wire and green plastic filter stuff.

I don't like stuff like that usually, but she was a patient and easy to get along with African. She did the tricks real good every time. I suppose a downside to this behavior would be the elephant would pick things up at random and hand them to people anywhere near, hoping or expecting a treat. Most people, it seemed, didn't appreciate the wealth of the object offered, what with elephant snot on it and all. But Flora was patient and knew she'd get recognized for her efforts. She was a better con than me, bless her heart.

Anyone else saying I didn't put this behavior on her first, is a fibber. I put some other stuff like sweeping with a broom, going to cue, spots on the floor, handing things of great value to one of the actors, but the show didn't want to use that one.

Flora and I helped pull a semi out of mud in Cooperstown (I made the harness). Another time, she pulled a dually pickup all the way around the big top in the mud. We'd pull a tractor tire around one in a while for some exercise. The tire got to be her toy. She and the tire had great fun; she'd wear it like a hat, but her favorite was to get it real dirty then roll it down the hill into the woods when I wasn't looking. Of course, I'd have to go get it. Every once in a while I'd put the harness on so she

had to pull her tire out herself. But she knew when it was showtime and that's when the tire would go over. (She didn't wear the harness with a headpiece on). So, I'd play the game and go get it for her. She was a fun elephant to be with, just pranking around with her filled lots of hours. By the way, I didn't know Gypsy Red or Bobby Kline and a bunch of others, but the best elephant man I know is Mark P., at Hawthorn. He stays with it. It would have to be an atom bomb to blow him off his job. I've seen kids panic and freeze, but Mark takes it on.

I saw Jim Zajicek at Hawthorn and at a few dates; in my opinion, he's got the "whats it's" and all to get it done. Besides, Mark likes workin' for him.

(It was great watching Jim give the "girls" a bath here in Bloomington on the Jordan show. They really enjoyed it, lifting this leg and that leg, to make sure he didn't miss any spot! Jim & Mark really take great care of the elephants. I learned Ronnie was trained by Mac MacDonald. Let us know some memories on her, Peggy! She looks great and is an excellent performer, as are the rest of the "girls." I look forward to visiting with Jim and Mark again and want to thank them for their hospitality and a great time! You, too, Gyp!-Cherie)

News From Our Circus Friends

Mike Sorrill, Jacksonville, IL sent along an article that appeared in the Daytona paper. I can't quite believe this but, it was reported when **Harry Hammond** passed away at 77, in 1995, he was cremated and his ashes were put in the safe in the Clyde Beatty Circus ticket wagon, as his family made no funeral arrangements. I seem to remember Harry visiting his sister in Kansas City, as often as he could. Well, this month, Harry's sister has prepared a family vault and Harry's ashes will "be retired from the road" and finally laid to rest. I loved talking to Harry about his circus adventures thru the years and he had quite a circus collection and was very generous to me, sharing some of his photos & often gave me elephant statues. He never forgot my birthday and I always looked forward to receiving his special Christmas cards. Harry was a very special person and a friend to fans all over the country. He always took time to greet them and he was like a little boy at Xmas when someone would give him circus memorabilia for his collection.

News From Circus World Museum

Circus World Museum will open May 6, continuing thru Sept. 4. This season, they will enhance their daily summer programming with an exciting new Big Top Circus Performance and a colossal new circus variety show-educational entertainment for "children of all ages." This season's cast will include the aerial acrobatic artistry of Gheorge & Luisa Marinof, the Jacob-Barreda African Elephants in an all-new production, The Rosaire Family's Crazy Canine Review, clowns Greg & Karen DeSanto, rola-bola & slackwire acrobatics featuring Sascha Gasser from Switzerland, Singing Ringmaster, David SaLoutos and a live band. The new Razzle Dazzle Revue, presented in the Museum's Moeller Pavilion, will feature 30 lively minutes of Vaudeville-type entertainment, including a live band, antique novelty instruments, juggling, comedy, unicycles and magical illusions. Circus World Museum favorites will be returning!

The Elephant Encounter, the Elephant Splash-Around, the Clown Makeup Demonstration and the C.P. Fox Wagon Restoration Center where you can watch circus wagons being restored, will all be there! Hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. May 6 thru Sept. 4.

Summer hours will be July 21-August 12, 9 to 9. Visit www.circusworldmuseum.com for more information! And now, the Great Parade News!

The 2000 Great Circus Parade will be July 16. The Parade will feature more than 100 units comprised of 700 horses, 1000 musicians, 100 clowns, 2000 costumed participants, 55 historic circus wagons and scores of elephants and other exotic animals.

New this year: The Parade will feature an expanded Grand International Tribute Section. More than 1/3 of the Parade will be devoted to units representing 50+ countries from around the globe.

The Ringling Lion Tableau is the major circus wagon restoration project being undertaken this year by CWM craftsmen. Built in 1882 for the Adam Forepaugh Circus, the wagon was sold in 1890 to the Ringling Bros. Circus of Baraboo. The vehicle served as the Ringling circus's lead bandwagon and the hallmark of all their parades, 1891-1903. The Parade activities will begin with the loading of the half-mile long Strong Funds Great Circus Train on Friday, July 7 at CWM. The Train will embark on a 3-day, 382 mile journey thru Wisconsin beginning July 8 and arriving at Milwaukee's lake front, July 10. Visit their web site at: www.circusparade.com or contact

Circus World Museum for more information at 608-356-8341. Have a great summer visiting CWM!

CIRQUE EQUINOX WOWS TORONTO

By Kimberly Little

Michelangelo & Carolina Nock brought their Nouveaux Theatrical Circus "Cirque Equinox" to the Toronto Winterfest, playing to capacity crowds Feb. 12-13. The Equinox big top, a two-pole, white vinyl structure, was set up just beyond a magnificent snow-sculptured entrance to the festival grounds. Contracted by the city of Toronto as one of the main, free attractions for the festival (and chosen over Cirque du Soleil) they presented 5 performances both days.

The 30-minute performance opened with Carolina Nock presenting a mind-boggling precision in contortion. Next, white-faced jester Timothy Tegge, assisted by Angelina Nock, did a brief comedy plate-spinning/balancing routine, eventually inviting someone from the audience to join them on stage. As the volunteer returned to the seats, Tegge was then joined on stage by Rietta Wallenda and together they performed a sword illusion. Michelangelo kept the swift-paced performance moving on the aerial straps. About midway thru this act, Rietta and Clinton Randall worked their way into the number, presenting web and aerial bar maneuvers. As a conclusion to this montage of aerial work, Michelangelo began spinning an enormous aluminum cube, which, when hit with colored lights, shot off a myriad of color and design throughout the tent.

As this trio left the spotlight, Tegge returned to present a body levitation illusion, assisted by Carolina Nock and Rietta Wallenda. The final display of the show was Michelangelo's stellar tower of chairs, with the entire cast of the show looking on. As Mike posed upon the highest chair (over 20' high), he towered over suspended flood lights, touching the canvas roof, a move that brought down the house. All returned to the stage for a final bow and standing ovations at every show.

Mel Lastman, Mayor of Toronto, attended one of the shows on Saturday to welcome the public. His schedule was spread so thin that he told the cast he probably couldn't stay for more than the first act or so. Once into the performance, he became so intrigued that he not only stayed for the entire show, but returned twice during the 2-day run, introducing & watching the show again. "You're going to love this circus," he told the audience. "I've seen it twice and just can't seem to get enough of it."

News From Our Circus Friends

Niles Calhoun writes "On March 1, I crossed over the Interstate 20 bridge at Clinton, Mississippi and happened to see a convoy of familiar looking vehicles heading east on I-20. The wheels clicked and I remembered Ray MacMahon telling me that he would be in the Vicksburg Auditorium around then. I was heading toward South Mississippi, so I grabbed the phone & called Royal American's Sarasota office. I was told that, yes, the show would still be in Mississippi for the next few days, showing in Brookhaven March 1 and Laurel on March 2.

I was able to finish my business early enough to get to Laurel right after the beginning of the first show. Show times were 5:15 & 7:30, I had been told and I found the National Guard Armory at about 5:30. Walking toward the Armory, I encountered a semi rig that carried a new petting zoo that Ray had acquired over the winter lay off. Although a tent will be used to house the zoo in the future, this was a nice, pleasant day that allowed the animals to enjoy the open air and 70 degree weather.

Walking toward the door, I was greeted by the man himself, Ray MacMahon, who has been operating indoor shows in the state of Mississippi for the past 20 years. Just inside the door was Netta, who was overseeing the concession area, which was set up to serve circus goodies in a quick and easy fashion.

This year's show featured Danny Carey and Tavanna Luvás, doing their chair balancing, rola bola and trapeze; The Piccolo family with their hula hoops, gaucho act and risley/foot juggling; Bela Tabak with his animals featuring the Peacock act; and Manuela Torres presenting the Big and Little Act, while Jose Torres does juggling. Clowns, new to Royal American this year, were Miss Sparkle and Bumbles, who presented some classic bits of clowning. Phil Chandler once again was the ringmaster.

A large crowd responded to the show's free children's tickets, with Ray reporting good business here in the Deep South. He also says that

he's thinking of offering the show in new venues. We will look forward to hearing more about that in the fall. Ray & Netta always provide an enjoyable show that is family oriented and family affordable and I have enjoyed each and every visit with Royal American over the years. (Thanks, Buddy!)

.....
Mary-Jane Foote writes that she was voted in as the new Central Vice President of the Circus Fans Assn. of America, effective at the CFA Convention in Sarasota!! Way to go girl! Hopefully, your editor will be there to help her celebrate and report on all the happenings!

.....
The next meeting of the **Terrell Jacobs Ring No. 7** will be March 26 at the Hall of Freedom in Uniontown, PA at 2:15 pm. Pat & Bill Merchant will bring the Cook House-Sloppy Joes or Ham Bar-B-Que-I'd like to be there!

It was noted at the last meeting about Ring expenses. Regis Amend made a motion to increase the 2001 dues to \$10 per year. Their newsletter is well worth the cost! At the next meeting, Bill Merchant will have information on Somerset Train Show on May 6 & 7. It was noted that Walker Bros. will not be in Pennsylvania this year.

Circus Mania 2000, Sept. 21-23 will be in Uniontown and guest speaker is "Diamond Jim" Parker. Hear of his experiences and his knowledge of the circus! Humorous and informative!

Important dates coming up: June 22-25, CMB Convention, Boise Idaho; June 28-July 23, Steamtown National Historical Site (Ring 86)-Circus Train behind steam with big wagons and Circus Model Display in roundhouse; Aug. 17-20, Model Display at Pennsylvania Railroad Museum at Strasburg; Sept. 21-23, Lehigh Township Fair-Circus Model Display; Oct. 21, James A. Bailey Ring Banquet; Oct. 21-22, Reading Society of Model Engineers Fall Open House and Nov. 11, Leonard Aylesworth Ring Banquet. The Ring owes Wylie Irwin & Regis Amend a lot. These 2 put in many long days (some with Wylie not getting home until midnight!). (You don't have to be a model builder to enjoy this newsletter or the Little Circus Wagon!)

THE FLETCH FILES By Mike Cecere

Howdy Folks! The first film we'll talk about is a classic B&W, "Tarzan's New York Adventure." Starring Johnny Weissmuller, this is the personal favorite of many elephant professionals as it features the MGM Elephants, trained by George Emerson, doing a great routine with "Boy" in the jungle. This routine is viewed by some (fictional) shady circus producers who "kidnap" Boy and take him to the United States and feature him their tent show. Of course, Tarzan, Jane and the irrepressible "Cheetah" go to his rescue with some absolutely hilarious moments. One of the highlights is Tarzan swinging around the high act rigging in the circus tent, being captured by the bad guys and placed in a menagerie cage. He then calls to the elephant herd, who pull their stakes and rush to his aid, pulling the bars of the cage apart with their trunks and on his command, blocking the escape of the circus producer's car. Great Film! Available from mail order video catalogs or I'm sure Jim Ridenour has this one in stock, with many others. Check with Jim first! Next, a real oldie, "King of the Jungle," starring Buster Crabbe. This was filmed in the early 30s in old Hollywood with equipment from the Al G. Barnes Circus. Lots of great scenes of that classic show on the lot, a big RR show with wooden wagons and wooden wheels. A must have film for circus modelers.

The plot is a wild man, raised by animals in the jungle, is brought back to America and is a sensation and he raises enough money to go back to the jungle with his lions. Worth getting just to see the old-tyme circus set-up.

Filmed not long after was "Charlie Chan at the Circus." One of a series of films based on the adventures of the great Asian-American detective, Charlie Chan, played by the masterful actor, Warren Oland. This chronicled murders and sabotage on the fictional "Kinney & Gaines" Circus which gangsters were trying to take over.

Lots of great Barnes show footage and funny scenes, mostly of Chan's son interacting with the circuses' female population. Well worth viewing and adding to your collection. Check with Jim on its availability.

And finally for this column, my all time classic vote for the classic category, "The Big Cage," starring Clyde Beatty and the cast of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. This was Beatty's first film, when he was in his prime, working 40, that's right, I said 40, lions & tigers, together in one cage, in one act. Combined with his unequalled flair for showmanship, this feat which he presented from around 1930-1934, while employed by the RBBB Corp,

which owned H&W, put Beatty on the map! Technically, it was mostly moving them in and out of the cage. but as a long time wild animal trainer, I can assure you, that is a lot of cats to have to control. You really have to see it on film to believe it. Interesting scenes of how things were done in those days and rare films of the Peru, Indiana Winter Quarters. Again, check with Jim Ridenour for the video. Until next time, happy watching!

News From Our Circus Friends

Gary Payne, Waterbury, CT writes "I attended a Tent 24 meeting and Angela Kycia who was a Jr. member with us, and star of our Top 12 Kid's Back Yard Circus, is now in her second season with Roberts Bros. Circus. She is doing trapeze, web, slide for life and other turns-5 in all! The secret to the CFA and fandom surviving is for us older fans to do things for kids and families!"

News From the Jack Bell-Helen Billetti Tent:

Betty Bartholomew received a note from **Patti Gatti** saying that everything is going great. She also received a bumper sticker that states, "Performing animals are well treated." Helen heard from **Gary Syers** and he sent pictures of his side show named "Something Strange." Congratulations to **Ron & Colleen Stewart**, **Michael and Roberta Sporrer**, **Bruce & Carole Johnson**, **Betty Bartholomew** and **Helen Billetti-Warburton** for making it to the Seattle Council Meeting. "Our tent thanks Washington Rodeo Assn., OABA rep Heidi Herriott and the Feld Organization." Those that would like to belong to this fine organization, please send a \$5 donation, to help with postage and receive their very newsy newsletter, to: **Beth Stewart**, 1115 N. 28th Place, Renton, WA 98056. The **Donn Moyer Reptile Safari** will be at the **Puyallup Fair April 14-16.**

I would like to start a fund to purchase a grave marker for **Mayme Ward**, of the **Flying Wards**, here in Bloomington, and have it dedicated at the **Circus Historical Society Convention** in Sept. The total price for the marker and installation is about \$800. There are several folks that are ready to get the ball rolling, so I am asking for your help. If you or your Tent/Ring would like to contribute to this fund, please write me at: **Cherie Valentine**, 1522 Clinton Blvd, Bloomington, IL 61701 or call 309-828-0737. **Eddie & Jennie Ward** both have a marker, but not Mayme. Any contribution would be very appreciated and helpful. Thank you, Cherie.

A PAWS FROM MOZART

By Mozart Valentine

Well, MEOW everyone, welcome back to my column. My mom says lots of nice folks have called and written saying they like it so, here we go! First, big news from the Indianapolis Zoo of a beautiful baby African elephant born! A great addition to a really well kept herd of elephants. A whole lot of real dedicated, hard working folks made that happen. And a real cute baby!

Baby elephants being born here in America in ever increasing numbers, shows good care and safe places to live. Spring usually brings a lot of new babies to zoos and parks. AND to our Back Yard, which I keep an eye on daily! Today, I saw 2 of our squirrels chasing each other around. Hopefully, soon I will have new babies to watch out the window. Honey & Dinger, my two dog friends, get to go outside, but Stuffie, my 15 year-old uncle and Wolfgang, my brother and I just have to be satisfied to watch the goings-on from the windows!

Mom went to see her friends at the **Jordan World Circus** last week and didn't even bring me any cotton candy. She told me I would have liked to have seen the tigers of Shane Johnson! And the beautifully cared for elephants, owned by Mr. John Cuneo. Mom said she was happy to see Joy and Gyp again after all these years-she knew them when she was on Circus Vargas. Gyp still made her laugh! Speaking of the Indianapolis Zoo, they have a great site for their elephants. Please visit it at: www.projectelephant.com. There are plenty of photos of the new baby elephant and you can even send in a name for HER! She was born at 4:30 am on March 6 and weighed 201 pounds and was 2 feet and 8 inches. From their site: "Over the next few months, Mom & baby have a lot of work to do. Mom has to teach baby what she needs to know, introduce her to the other elephants and teach her how to interact with the keepers. Please feel free to send well wishes to babyelephant@indyzoo.com. If you would like to support our growing family of elephants, contact Emma Cusson 317-630-2025 or

e-mail her at ecusson@indyzoo.com. Also on the Zoo's website is: "Officials of the Zoo are extremely pleased to announce that the first African elephant in the world ever conceived by artificial insemination was born to 24-year-old Kubwa after what veterinarians describe as a rapid (only 2 hours!) and uneventful labor after a 22-month gestation. Debbie Olson, Director of Elephant Conservation & Science Programs and veterinarian Dr. Dennis Schmitt attribute a great deal of Kubwa's success and easy labor to her excellent physical condition. Dr. Schmitt, associate professor at SW Missouri State University and vet at the Dickerson Park Zoo, was present at the birth and has been very instrumental in the artificial insemination program. He has used a related AI technique on Asian elephants at the Dickerson Park Zoo in Springfield, Missouri, where one of the Asian elephants became the first elephant in the world to successfully conceive and give birth to a calf late last year."

Another baby elephant is celebrating his 2nd birthday on March 15 at the Cincinnati Zoo! Ganesh is reaching his terrible twos!! "Weighing in at nearly a ton, Ganesh is one of the biggest two-year-old babies around. You can join the party at the Zoo March 18 & 19 from 1-3 pm. There will be a giant Birthday Card that YOU can sign, elephant movies, elephant tales (story telling) and you can watch Ganesh romp and play through his birthday cake! You can also send home-made birthday cards that will be used to decorate the area! Send cards or drawings to: Ganesh's Birthday Party, c/o Cincinnati Zoo, POB 198074, Cincinnati, OH 45219." Wish Mom & I could visit all the Zoos and see the cute baby elephants! Be sure and watch the Animal Planet channel on Tuesdays & Sundays for "The Keepers" which is shot on location at the San Diego Wild Animal Park. "The Keepers" offers viewers a compelling glimpse behind the scenes as keepers, veterinarians and other staff devote their lives to caring for the amazing creatures of the Wild Animal Park. Well, that's all folks, time to see what Mom cooked me for dinner. Meow, for now.



Berta DeLoria



KEN BENSON 5619 ANTOINETTE ST.
SARASOTA, FLORIDA 34232
1-941-320-9775



*H. G. Barnes Circus
Season of 1935*

Paul Price & Ken Benson Doing Boo's Feet

