

# BACK YARD

Volume III, Issue #43

May 15, 1998

## BRUTES OF THE BIG TOP

BY BILL BALLANTINE

### TRUE MAGAZINE 1960 PART IV

Smokey reached into a cardboard box at his feet & hauled out a small gas-powered toy racing car & an plane with which he began to tinker. "If it wasn't fer elephants, I'd be doin' som'thin' with planes. I love them an' motorcycles an' speed boats an' sports cars." Bullhands were bringing elephants from the menagerie & forming them into a line near our shelter. "Time fer me to get movin'". We gotta get ready for Spec."

Smokey himself led the assembled Spec-elephants along the big-top stake line to the circus backyard where bullhands & several wardrobe boys began draping the animals with the trappings of the pageant-spangled blankets, feathered head-gear & lavish howdahs. Several craggy faces-unshaven & puffy-eyed from lack of sleep-were grotesquely framed in white lace neck ruffles & flippant adaptations of French Empire chapeaux. Only a handful of Smokey's vast troupe appeared in Spec. It was one of 3 big top presentations involving elephants, but not the most exciting. That one came later in the program, a number entitled, "Mama's In The Park." The big show's entire elephant population of 51 appeared in this production. Some of the huge gallumphing creatures wore Keystone Kop hats & wielded nightsticks in their trunks. "Mama" elephants wore floppy flowered bonnets & sedately pushed baby elephants who sat up, wild-eyed & restrained by heavy chains, in ungainly contraptions which were supposed to be baby go-carts but looked more like Sherman tanks. The third elephant number was a formal 3-ring



number was a formal 3-ring display directed by Hugo Schmidt. The modern circus tends to present its elephants as a spectacle of mass & might, surrounded by dancers, acrobats & clowns, with little attention given to the heavy but strangely graceful individual performance of the monsters. Trainers moan that today their craft too often is smothered under pointless bespangled production. "There are days when you can't see the elephants for the girls," complained a grizzled old-timer at the Grease Joint where Smokey & I were having coffee to kill time between numbers." Since the rough-and tumble days of tent trouping in the early 1900s, no circus has attempted to breed elephants.

(Continued on Page 4)

## BACK YARD

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The column, "The Fox," is written by Jenny Walenda. Other material is written by Cherie Valentine, unless otherwise identified as to author. Reprints from other published material are identified as to source.

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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.

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## BAD BUILDING BLUES

BY MIKE CECERE

Since the majority of circuses in America shifted from under canvas operations to indoor venues, the true ingenuity of showpeople has been tested, adopting to performing in arenas of varied sizes.

Adding to the confusion for animal people is the added challenge of inconsistent flooring & lack of security while moving animals around, especially from the aging, crumbling Shrine Circus organizations. As recently as this past winter, one of America's top elephant men, well regarded in both the zoo & circus community, was bitten by the "Curse of the Bad Buildings." Always in control of his elephants, he undertook to give the best show possible under cramped conditions and withstood not one, but two serious incidents while trying to maneuver his huge charges in a very cramped hallway.

What's worse is the second one was due to lax security in the back-door area & could well have been prevented. This incident, while gaining brief nationwide attention, mainly through the "Internet", produced no injuries; however, it cost the trainer several weeks work with another producer. The fault, one would think, would be in who was responsible for security. Food for thought, eh?

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### Ringling Files Deceptive Trademark Complaint

April 22: Ringling has charged that PETA misappropriated the Ringling service mark & trade name of its circus by registering "ringlingbrothers.com" as a domain name on the Net, containing material criticizing Ringling because of the use of animals in their show. Julie Strauss, Ringling VP & Corp. Counsel said, "These extremists have stolen our most valued corporate asset-the good name of Ringling Bros. to deceive the public. Our name is being used as a lure to entice children & their families to a web site that attacks us, our superb record of animal care & our business. In 1995, Ringling established the Center for Elephant Conservation, a \$5 million state-of-the-art facility solely dedicated to the breeding & conservation of the Asian elephant. The ability of Ringling Bros. to use its registered trade mark as a domain name is a substantial part of its opportunity to promote products & services from that site."

THE FOX !



My dear Friends.

I thought I better write this before some other bad news comes to my ear.

Mrs. Mac Mahon came home for a week to check on her home crew.

Harry Dubsy is still out the Sarasota Circus and as I was told is doing very well. The Circus was first to go out for just 8 weeks, but it was doing so well they extended it for 8 more weeks, who knows, maybe it will stay out all season, Haji is taking care of the Royal Palace Circus and as I was told also is doing well.

Angela sister of Harry and Jonosh Dubsy had to be Hospitalize again for a few days, but is back out of the hospital and slowly recuperating.

Penny Wilson is also back on her feet and is now back at work.

Maja Zerbini is this year with Hammid show she was in Sarasota just a few days and parked at the Galombo place.

Harold Alsana is doing ok now to. He recuperated well after his operation.

The Wallenda Family, Jennys side is doing the 7 one more time for 2 1/2 weeks in St Louis for Circus Flora after that they will split up. Tino with his Family will go his way and Delilah and her Family will be all summer at a Park and Rietta will go back to her brother Ricky to work. Tony Hernandez will go back to Chicago with his sister and Dieter Galombo back with Hamid Circus.

Dicky Garden reported that his show also is doing well. Tommy Hanneford will be here in town with the Sahib Shrine circus.

While I was in Detroit I saw Bruno Eda Sminsas son and he told me that his wife will come back to him and travel with him soon again.

Got a call from Norbu, he told me that there was a biography from Los Vegas and they mentioned him. He also told me a funny story about

Los Vegas. While he was working there a fellow named Cohen came one day up to him and told him he was fired. Norbu paid not much in tension to this but then told the performance director the a guy just fired him. He ask who was the guy, Norbu pointed to the guy. Oh from Mister Cohen, well I guess then you are fired. (The reason for this all was that Norbu distracted the people from gambling). Well came the next day, to many people ask about the almost human Gorilla, and Norbu was hired back.

Norbu also told me that daughter Nobie has bought herself a house in Encino California and Norbu and Arden will go there soon to help with the moving in.

Oh yes, get this Norbu told me that he will have himself cloned, so that he can leave his money to himself. Leave it to Norbu to think of something like that.

Jenny Wallenda has friends from Germany staying with her for a few weeks, Friends she had for 66 years, and still their is the same friendship then it was then. It is great to be friends for so many years.

Eugen Nock and Family just got back from Johannesburg South Africa, they performed for a big Festival there and even the President came to see them. Now they will be going to Hawaii and then to Japan this summer.

YOUR FOX LOVES YOU

HAVE A WONDERFUL MOTHERS DAY AND ALL YOU DADDY'S. DO NOT FORGET TO GIVE YOUR WIFE FLOWERS, AND TELL YOUR CHILDREN TO BE SPECIAL NICE TO THEIR MOTHER.

(Jenny had beautiful decorations on her newsletter. A large box of long stem roses, a big bouquet of flowers, a lovely woman with a 2 rose corsage, and a delivery man, carrying a box of flowers.)

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From Caribbean Gardens: Naples, FL-Tim Tetzlaff reports 2 new dingo pups are in the Safari Canyon presentation. A live camera was added to provide close-ups of the animals, including the monitor lizards. A rare sable antelope was born at the zoo in late Nov.

## BRUTES OF THE BIG TOP.....

breed elephants. "But I think maybe it could be done," ventured Smokey. "Doc Henderson, the vet, he's been wantin' to try it. Build hisself a compound away off somewheres for maybe a half-dozen or so females. Get ahold of a good bull an' let 'em go at it. Take extra good care of the mother, scientific like. They's so *much* been done nowadays with medicines an' X-rays an' all, an' vitamins, I bet the Doc he could do it if he has half a mind to." An elephant cannot be handled for mating purposes the same as a stud horse. Elephants require prolonged courtship. "I've seen the beginnings of many a elephant love-match," said Smokey. "They're a lotta fun to watch. The male he comes up real careful-almost tippy-toe-an' he makes playful little lowin' an' blowin' noises in her ear. He touches her ever so gently with his trunk, an' he shares special tid-bits with her-stale bread, cigar butts an' pieces of watermelon rind (they love *that*). He might get the wind batted out'a him a few times, but if he sticks at it long enough he scores-that is, if the old girl wants him to." The average female elephant comes in heat 3-5 times a year; some never do & others only twice yearly. The new-born, about 3 feet long and, according to Smokey, *exactly* two inches taller, weighs from 160 to 220 pounds.

In 1952, there were 264 elephants in the U.S. Circuses seldom exhibit male elephants, as they are considered unpredictable, unruly & very dangerous to handle. When I asked Smokey which male was his candidate for elephant public-enemy No. 1, he said, "Well, there was Tusko for one. He was so big an average-size man could walk under his belly without hardly stoopin'. Tusko was a great hell-raiser in his day."

Tusko measured 10 feet 2 inches at shoulder & weighed 7 tons. He was overly fond of his owner, Al G. Barnes, the famous circus operator. Whenever Mr. Barnes was off the show Tusko would droop & sulk or else kick up a row. Tusko's most memorable outburst was his roistering barney at Sedro-Wooley, Washington, in the early 30s. In that grand swath of destruction, Tusko laid low innumerable chicken coops, pig pens, fences, brick wall & hastily locked doors. With his huge curving tusks the great elephant upended one car to the roof of another; his trunk bashed in hoods & radiators galore. For his finish trick, Tusko broke into a moonshiner's barn & slurped himself a bellyfull of whiskey mash. He was found the next day, sleeping off his binge. "They say," laughed Smokey, "that he looked jest like one of them convention celebrators what got too big a snootfull."

"Palmin' off elephants is an ole' circus trick. In the ole' days an elephant-killin' was jest hushed up; they figured a roughneck was jest an expendable nobody. Then the murderer's name was changed an' the animal sold or traded to another show." After he'd taken a dangerous dislike to his trainer, Rajah, a Barnum elephant, was re-christened Samson & passed along to another circus.

"Black Diamond is the killer us elephant men always talks about-a big tusker. Diamond become overfond of his trainer, a guy name of Curley Prickett, an' jealous uv Curley's women. Curley used to hug an' kiss his ole' lady in front a' the elephant jest to tease it. One day, after he'd left show business, Curley he come visitin' the show-in Corsicana, Texas, it was-not with his wife, but the lady he worked for on a ranch, a Mrs. Donahue. The elephants was waterin' at a street trough when Curley an' the lady come up to them. Mrs. Donahue tried to pet Black Diamond an' the elephant turned on Curley, caught him with its tusks an' tossed him over a car at the curb. Then Diamond knocked the lady down an' run one tusk clean through her. Three days later, Black Diamond was killed by the town people." I asked Smokey for some stampede advice. The best way to handle one of those terrors he said, is to stop it before it gets started, but if it does get going, just to think fast & do whatever you can. "I tell my boys jest get out in front an' hold your hands over your eyes." He grinned. "I'm always afeared some lunk-head's gonna believe me an' get hisself *good* an' stampeded." When Smokey led his heaving gray ladies after their performance from backyard to menagerie, I tagged along. As we loped along I had a good chance to observe the remarkably graceful operation of the elephant's legs. They have layers of knuckle-jointed bones & a cushioning of several thicknesses of tough, resilient gristle between the joints which helps absorb the animal's tremendous weight.

It was feeding time and Smokey examined the fodder. "Damn it," he said to Big John, "you can tell by punchin' your fist in a bag that this sweet-feed ain't no damn good. It's too dried-out an' wormy. It should be spongy. I ain't gonna feed that!" Big John looked worried, but he didn't talk back either. Sweet-feed contains everything an elephant needs in its diet except hay. The label on a bag gave the contents as: crimped oats, cracked corn, seed oil, molasses, wheat bran, alfalfa meal, calcium carbonate & other minerals, such as iron & iodized salt. "Ain't never enough salt, so we always adds some. You gotta take it easy on the oats cause elephants 'feel their oats' just like horses do!"

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### **A Reckless Era of Aerial Performance; The Evolution of Trapeze**

“Just how important is it to be the first to do a thing? How important is it to do the most, to go the highest, the farthest? How Important? Some people have died for it.”

\*\*Did you ever wonder who first swung from a trapeze? Did you ever wonder when the first aerial somersault was thrown? Did you ever wonder how the complex team aerial performances were developed and who invented them? If you have, you are not alone.

\*\*In 1985, circus historian Steve Gossard discovered a conflict. Two different cities in the United States had taken credit for the invention of the particular type of trapeze performance called the *flying return act*. Since then Gossard has been fixated on finding the source of the invention of this act and solving the mystery. He has spent thousands of hours scrolling through 19th century periodicals in tracing the evolution of the various types of trapeze performances.

\*\*What he uncovered is more than historical study. It is an adventure. It is a mystery. It is the story of **A Reckless Era of Aerial Performance**. Share the author’s sense of discovery as he traces the evolution of the daring and beautiful art form, and chronicles the exploits of dozens of long-forgotten foolhardy aerial daredevils.

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The **Albuquerque Journal** reports that the 2 elephants the city says it granted a new lease on life to are getting healthier by the day, according to caretakers. Donna, an 8 year old African, has gained hundreds of pounds since being taken to the Rio Grande Zoo last August. Donna & Irene are in a court battle over whether the city can keep them. Zookeepers say the elephants are showing improved attitudes too, along with their improved weight. It must be all that comfort food they are getting!

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### **127th EDITION RINGLING RED UNIT:**

Mex. City, Mex.-Palacio de los Deportes-To 6/7  
Shreveport,LA- Hirsch Mem. Coliseum-June 13-14  
Memphis, TN- The Pyramid-June 18-21  
Little Rock, AR-Barton Coliseum-June 25-28  
San Antonio, TX-Freeman Coliseum-July 1-5  
Austin, TX-Erwin Sp.Events Ctr-July 9-12  
College Station, TX-Reed Arena-July 14-15  
Houston, TX-Compaq Ctr-July 17-26  
Dallas, TX-Reunion Arena-July 29-Aug. 9  
Fort Worth, TX-Convention Ctr-Aug. 12-16

### **128TH EDITION RINGLING BLUE UNIT:**

Hershey, PA-Hersheypark Arena-May 21-25  
Albany, NY-Pepsi Arena-May 28-31  
Syracuse, NY-OnCenter-June 2-3  
Rochester, NY-Rochester War Memorial-June 5-7  
Lexington, KY-Rupp Arena-June 11-14  
Lubbock, TX-Memorial Coliseum-June 18-21  
Las Vegas, NV-Thomas & Mack Center-June 26-28  
Phoenix, AZ-America West Arena-July 1-5  
Fresno, CA-Fresno Convention Ctr-July 9-12  
Long Beach, CA-Long Beach Arena-July 15-19  
Los Angeles, CA-LA Sports Arena-July 22-26  
Anaheim, CA-Arrowhead Pond-July 28 to Aug. 4  
Inglewood, CA-Great Western Forum-Aug. 6-9  
San Diego, CA-Sports Arena-Aug. 12-16

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**Kelly Miller Circus:** Westminster, MD-June 6-7  
Laurel, MD-June 8-9; West Friendship-June 10-11;  
Frederick, MD-June 12-14.

**Roberts Bros. Circus:** East Liverpool, OH-June 1;  
Carrollton, OH-6/2; Huran, OH-6/6; Legrange-6/7;  
Hartville, OH-6/11; Beaver Hills, PA-June 13.

**Clyde Beatty:** Garfield, NJ-May 28-29

**Terrell Jacobs Ring #7 Meeting:** May 31-in the  
Hall of Freedom Museum, Uniontown, PA.

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**News Item:** A veal processing plant in Wimauma, FL was burned to the ground last week. All USDA records were lost when a separate building used by them for their ongoing inspections of meat processed there was also burned. The Animal Liberation Front-ALF-has assumed blame. The FBI has named them as a terrorist org. due to their attacks on labs, meat processors, mink farms, etc. ALF members have had their defense financed by PETA.

## FROM THE GOLDEN YEARS OF THE BILLBOARD-VALENTINE VAULTS,1953

\*George Hubler talked with Milt Herriott at Cole quarters in Peru, IN, and visited at Bloomington, IL with Billy Ward, Jimmy Olsen, Harry LaMar & Lowell & Mary Sherer, all rehearsing a flying act at the YMCA.

\*The training of Polack's new 6 baby elephant act by Mac McDonald at Louis Goebel's farm at Thousand Oaks, CA is being watched by the tv program, "You Asked For It." \*Cole & Walters Circus will make an effort to assemble a 10-elephant herd for the coming season. The Miller-Woodcock baby elephants are already set.

\*Jan. 24: Washington, DC-Mills Bros. Circus's Burma kept 2000 guests waiting more than 2 hours at a party given in her honor. Difficulty was experienced in unloading the star of the Republicans & her two friends, Miss Lena & Miss Jenny from their special freight car. Burma's inaugural "gown" was knit by citizens of Greenville, VA. She wore a corsage of American Beauty roses. \*From Polack Western: Pinky & June Madison, with Frenchie Durant, present "three girls from Hollywood"-Queenie, Sally & Happy... Mayme Ward helps everyone with wardrobe. She created new wardrobe for June Madison...Andre Fox is our quick change artist. Joe Sherman & Ed Raymond gave a special hospital show...Bob & Ann Porter have a new house trailer, and Millie Ward is busy redecorating her trailer.At Cucciola's birthday party, June Madison directed Nicki Bell, Vicky Zoppe & Joyce Ward in an Hawaiian floor show...July 4th: The Wong Troupe cooked delicious Chinese dinners in their motel...The Ward-Bell girls debuted new warm weather wardrobe of metallic nylon...Joe Sherman's sudden service taxi is again accommodating the clowns on outdoor dates... Sonny Moore gives his pooches a cooling dunk before each matinee...Pinky & June Madison have a new house trailer...Ruggera Zoppe is practicing iron jaw under Barquette's direction...Gilbert Fox gave a party for children on the show for his 6th birthday...June Madison kept the coffee pot working overtime for visitors & Bea Konyot is working in the Triska high-wire act, while Alberto Zoppe is breaking new horses for the act...Gus Bell caught the largest salmon on a recent fishing excursion on Humboldt Bay...The Walter Klausers & Herta stopped at Clear Lake to enjoy the swimming...Dennis Stevens upset Ed Raymond & his rangers by arriving for the Capt. Video gag in a plastic space helmet...

Lola Dobritch has new wardrobe for her tight wire act...From February: The Valentino Sisters portable trapeze turn, featuring four-year-old Cherie, are playing dates around Normal, IL, their hometown. They are set to play Omaha Shrine for Rink Wright...Hub Hubell, rodeo announcer & fancy sharpshooter, is keeping busy making the rodeo circuit in Florida & writes that business this winter has been good among the bronko clan. Hub is handling mike chores for the Diamond B Rodeo & will also announce the Lakeland event in March. The Diamond B outfit will include Red Pilz & his comedy car...From Hamid Morton: Memphis (Feb. 15)-During Pat Anthony's lion act, 2 of the cats escaped, ran past the audience & out a side door into the street. Speedy work on the part of Anthony, performers & prop men put the cats back into their cage within a short time & without causing a panic...From Orrin Davenport: Entertainers from the circus appeared at a party at the Mayflower Hotel, including Tommy & Kay Hanneford, Otto Griebing & the Henrys. Guests at the dinner were Ernie Burch & Felix Adler...From Macon, GA: Lucio Cristiani tried an unintentional new stunt here & came off with 20-stitch injuries. Rushing out of a store to his double-parked car, he made a wrong guess about which side of a pillar the door was on & crashed thru a plate-glass window. Floyd King said, "He's used to getting banged up from time to time; it's an occupational hazard!"...From Wallace & Clark: Walter Jennier & Miss Aerialetta will return for their 3rd season. Billy Powell will do wire & have a pit show. GeeGee Engesser will work elephants & assist Red Hovious in the concert...Dory Miller will take the 6 Kelly-Miller elephants booked by Paramount Pictures to Hollywood. The bulls are worked in the film "Elephant Walk". Freddie Logan will have other bulls at the Omaha Shrine for Rink Wright...From Ringling: New this year are 7 baby elephants, trained by Louis Reed & presented by Eugene Scott. Scott can look over the back of the largest one, while the tiniest comes but to his waist. Jeannie Sleeter & Rose Alexander each work 5 big bulls in the end rings...Mary Jane Miller reports: The May issue of *Esquire* has a circus story of Bill Ballantine & also Mercury Magazine, called, "Circus Slang" & the June issue of *Brief* carries a story of Emmett Kelly, with photos by Dick Miller...Upon arriving in NY, Father Sullivan took Felix Adler, as usual, on his yearly trip to buy a new pig for the season...Willie Krause is now doing the vocals in the show, replacing Harold Ronk...

**From Siebrand Bros:** Gerald Pina nearly broke up the iron jaw number when Penny Wilson's serpentine fluttered down on him like a huge tent & he spent the rest of the number struggling to get untangled!..Penny is the new "champ." She knocked out Concha Erikson during practice when she was kicking up into a handstand. Concha had a real shiner the next day & took a lot of ribbing with good humor...Penny & Josephine Petrilla ride the Merry-Go-Round every night after the show...Rudy Mueller reports that the baby elephants have accordion-pleated 15 buckets thus far this season...Rosie substantiated Rudy's claim that elephants are expensive to feed when she ate a \$20. bill from a jacket he'd left too near...May 9th-C.J. Matchett left for Tampa to bring his wife, Teresa, & children to next stand. Teresa will do web & traps. Daughter Victoria is just one month old...In Blackfoot, Idaho, Rudy's elephant, Rosie, tried to join the football practice & then took little Judy with her into an irrigation ditch...Cathy Matchett began school classes & is working clown gags...Carl Erikson had 5 flat tires on the trek from Blackfoot to Albuquerque...**From King-Cristiani:** Highlights of Sundays off are sound movies that Benni Zerbini shows at night in the back yard. He shows feature length pictures, as well as shorts of the Cristiani families...Eloise Berchtold is riding the camel she broke in quarters...Birthdays celebrated were Jane & Carin Cristiani...Being in Canada, the girls miss the launderettes...Food is cheap & cuisine exceptionally good...One thing we miss is the appearance of circus fans on the lot. Haven't seen a fan since we left Southern Ontario, reports Col. Harry Thomas...**From Hunt Bros:** Lou Barton's dog walked off with & buried Lou's new false teeth...**From Kelly Morris:** Harry Rawls has added a fire eater to his Side Show...Mrs. Jane Comeau, mother of Antoinette Concello & Mickey King, died April 23 in Bloomington, IL...**From Hagen Bros:** The Side Show's baby lion escaped from its cage. Many took cover, & only after the cat was recaptured was it discovered that the cub didn't have a tooth in its head!..Jack Banta, tight wire, blew his jump over the flame of fire & before he could get to his feet, the prop men had his wire rigging sloughed & loaded in the prop truck...**From Long Island:** Bill Atterbury & his Sky Kings have their twin 120-foot sway poles here. They next appear at Pontchartrain Beach, New Orleans... **From Bailey Bros:** Little Antoinette Gutierrez is billed as the youngest

bounding rope performer. Her sister, Alisia, debuted with a neck loop turn...Armida Gutierrez & Shirley Stevens have bought dogs...On the 170 mile jump from Mt. Vernon to Wenatchee thru Stevens Pass, Mario burned the clutch on his car, and the Gutierrez family burned a gasket on their truck...**From Tom Packs:** Rose Behee, substituting in the Flying LaVals act at St. Louis, received a fractured nose & other injuries when she missed a triple to the net...Lou Jacobs, Ringling clown, & Jean Rockwell, who joined the Big One as an aerialist 5 years ago to write a book, were married June 12 at Jersey City.

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### LIVE AT THE RINGLING CIRCUS MUSEUM

Celebrating their 50th Anniversay, the Ringling Museum opened the National Circus School of Performing Arts this month. "We hope it will give the circus museum a higher profile. It will certainly add excitement," said Deborah Walk, curator of the circus museum. Pedro Reis, co-founder of the school with Dolly Jacobs, said the museum has been supportative of efforts to launch the school, a not-for-profit organization. Museum visitors who watch the artists can ask questions & learn how acts are perfected. Dolly will share the bill with the hand-balancing act Vision (Carmita Lorador & Richard Jecsmen) & The Amazing Villams (jugglers Janos & Ilonka Csikasz). Solo bicyclist Sylvain du Bois from the Montreal Ecole National du Cirque also will appear in the first 10 days of shows. Steve Smith, director of Ringling Clown College from 1985 to 1995, will be program director for the school. Jacobs said, "We have a talented group of performers ready to pass on their knowledge. The school is a good cause that we hope people will support." (From Sarasota Herald 4/27/98)

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**News From Des Moines:** "Pig With 3 Eyes Gets New Home-April 13-"Rudy, the pig with 3 eyes & 2 snouts, but only 2 ears, will not end up as a ham sandwich or a road show exhibit. The 8-month old pig, whose Cyclops-like middle eye can't see, will grow old frolicking on a 750-acre ranch east of Santa Barbara. Pigs Without Partners, a LA-based animal resque group, bought Rudy, from Marquette, IA, to make sure the rare porker never becomes a freak on display. The group changed his name to Ditto. His new home will include a custom pig house, complete with a swimming pool & a customized care & feed regimen. The Yorkshire-Duroc crossbreed has been featured on TV & was a local celebrity when he was just a babe.

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## BACK YARD GOSSIP

\*Dolly Jacobs & Pedro have started their circus school in Sarasota this month. Please wish them success.

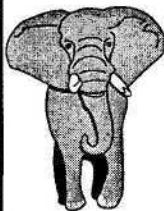
\*A visitor to Reid Bros. in Redding, CA. talked to Brian Franzen and he said his ponies were taken from him in San Bernadino by the Animal Care People. They came on the lot and said they were taking them! They didn't have a court order & he probably didn't have to give them up. But, with other animals to care for, he did so there would be no trouble. The show had 2 full houses in Redding with very little advertising. Those children tickets do the job!! Brian LaPalme is doing well and is an excellent ringmaster. \*3/27-Washington Post reports: Five animal-rights activists were arrested by D.C. reports at the MCI Center after shackling themselves together in a protest against the Ringling Circus. They linked themselves with heavy-duty bicycle locks around their necks near center ring about 7:30 pm & were taken into custody a few minutes later. This was during the pre-show period where the public is invited to go to the arena floor to meet the performers. This delayed the start of the show for a few minutes & the public cheered as the protesters were led away by police. The protesters were members of a group called Compassion Over Killing. (3/28 Page B7)

From the Circus Model Builders Home Page: \*Carson & Barnes had a truck stolen near Houston, but it was recovered about a week later. \*Gigi Tegge has finished her new book on P.T. Barnum, publishing later this year. \*Kay Rosaire will be at the Clementon, NJ Amusement Park again this summer. \*Big Apple Circus has a new cookhouse & 2 new Caterpillar generators. \*Bella Nock won the "Silver Clown" second place at this year's Monte Carlo Festival. \*Sasha Rawls Fry had a baby girl, 8 lbs. 13 ozs. (Thanks, guys!)

\*Rumor has it that Ringling has just bought Circus Krone and is to bring it over to travel on 42 trucks to play shopping center. Also, Chuck Smith has bought part of Circus Vargas from Joe, Roland's partner. \*Another rumor: John "Gopher" Davenport's son, Darryl, will be put on trial in Albuquerque, NM later this week in the animal cruelty case which stemmed from the death of 1 elephant & the seizure of 8 llamas & another elephant by police last August. One key matter to be determined will be the exact ownership of the remaining elephant. That elephant, plus the 8 llamas have been housed at the Biological Park by order of the court since they were seized. A second man, arrested at the same time, has disappeared & is a fugitive.

## \*\*\*\*\*CIRCUS PAGES\*\*\*\*\*

AMERICA'S FASTEST  
GROWING CIRCUS  
SOMETHING NEW &  
DIFFERENT EVERY  
YEAR!!



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### RED FEZ DAYS BY MIKE CECERE

Despite the well circulated information on the decline of Fraternal Organizations and just about any kind of club, except the Militants in America. There is still a lot of life left in the Shriners.

In deed, despite an aging membership, they still provide a goodly amount of sponsorship for circuses & are an all around nice group of fellows.

But as an animal person, I have to say these jolly fellows have let us down. Despite being captains of Finance & Industry, in their respective cities & having dozens of professionals amongst their ranks, they have yet to make significant contributions to the battle against the hate groups masquerading as animal rights activists.

They could easily close down or injunction such groups and their protests, but they do nothing. By the same token, they often expect circus producers & elephant owners to fork over a large percentage of elephant, pony & other side incomes that many show people are just squeaking by on!

You know singers, rock groups & other artists playing some of the same venues have "Riders" in their contract which demand security & protection from protesters, etc. Maybe its time all animal acts put the same kind of Rider to insist the sponsors take some action. Are we not worthy of it?

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Rumor has it that the Ringling vet resigned as a result of a flap over the death of the baby elephant, Kenny. Ringling is rumored to be trying to make the vet the fall guy-when he was not at fault!!

## BOBBY HAKES ANSWERS ???

**Answer:** Cirque Soleil is a very good & popular show but is a far cry from being a circus.

**Question:** Oh yeah, perhaps you could be kind enough to tell us what is a circus?? (From Circus Arts e-mail list) A circus is more than just a performance. It is a combination of many things. It is sights, smells, sounds, excitement. A visit to a circus is to walk on a midway & see sights that can't see every day. The side shows, the menagerie, the cotton candy, the souvenirs, the pony ride, the talkers telling you things you have never heard before. To enter a big top & see all the rigging wires of the different acts & smell the sawdust mixed with the smell of animals & most of all the excitement of what you are going to see. Then the band plays circus music like they have done for hundreds of years. The spec with all of the circus people in costumes from around the world, riding & leading elephants, camels, zebras, horses, pulling beautiful circus wagons. Then the cat acts, with more than 50 animals, with Clyde Beatty mixing lions, tigers, bears, pumas & leopards all natural enemies all in one big cage. Up in the air, with 4 or 5 single trap acts as they tear down the steel arena. Then 3 rings of bareback riders like the Cristiani Family, Justino Loyal, & the Hanneford Family. Next, a 3 ring display of chimps, Shetland ponies & a good dog act. Next, 3 wire acts, Luis Munoz, Tonito, Attalina. Now a super spectacle, "Holidays", with over 100 human & animal actors celebrating all the holidays. Now the funny clowns, over 35 of them on the hippodrome track, doing complete nonsense! Next, 3 rings of hand-balancing: the Carmenas, Wendanis, & in the center ring, Unis, the man who stands on his forefinger. The clowns again with Paul Jung. 3 rings of dressage; Marion Seifert, Alex Konyot, Nadie Houcke. The funny clowns. A 3-ring display; the Marilex plate spinners, Mazzano Truzzi juggler, the Cupers unicycles. Now, 45 elephants in Mama's in the Park-with elephants pushing baby carriages with keystone cops, midgets & dancing girls filling the hippodrome track & all 3 rings with a musical display. Next, in upper reaches of the big top on the high wire, Josephine Berosini. 3 rings of action; the Fenis-Feroni Duo on 3 roly boly; the Oliveras on the horizontal bars; the Seguras on the spring board. Next, a aerial ballet with 40 girls on the webs and in the center ring, Pinto Del Oro on the balancing trapeze. 3 rings of liberty horses with Gene Lipwska, Czeslan Mroczkowski, Hans Ussim. Next, the wild west Charros Mexican ropers & riders; the

Gordons whip cracking act; Miss Marion rope spinning. The funny clowns again. Now, flying acts; The Saberjets, The Palacios, Clayton Behees's Falcons, all doing a triple somersault. Time for the clowns again to tear down the flying nets. Next, Takeo Usui, a Japanese head balancing act. And now, 3 rings & 2 stages of artistic achievements; The Naukos; Evy & Evert; Alfred Burton, Jr.; The Radinos; The Superbras. Next, 3 rings with The Fredonias Risley; Yong Brothers & Sisters, hand balancing; the Whirlwinds, tumbling; The Three Nocks, sway pole. Then the finale with all the cast. Then you go back out through the menagerie & see all the animals; buy a souvenir & maybe the side show. That is what I call a circus!

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**Frank Robie reports:** Lots of circus activity in the East! **Amos Bolieau & Bob Goldsack** placed an exhibit of circus memorabilia at Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, NH last week, ending with Dartmouth band under maestro Culpepper with 1 hour of circus music, followed by 3 acts from the **Big Apple Circus**. **Carson & Barnes** is moving into the East big time this summer! **Jack Belles & Frank** visited **Vidbel Circus**, a full Shrine show, and said what a lovely show it was. The Shrine signed a contract for next year for them! **Frank & Al House** drove to Wilkes-Barre & saw the **Billy Martin** show, booked by **Jimmy Hamid**. Another top-notch show! They had everything plus seals-no bears. Hamid is a name to be reckoned with!! As usual, New Jersey is a great circus state!

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**From Circus Flora:** The opening in St. Louis had about 1300 folks at each two shows. There were standing ovations for the **7 Man Pyramid of the Wallendas**. And also for **Sasha & Aurelia** on the Cloud Swing. If this beautiful show comes your way, do yourself a favor and please go see it! You may not get the chance to see the 7 high again! Look up **David Balding** and tell him **Cherie** sent you! Ask him if **Bert**, the goat, is receiving visitors! The **Heritage Collection Museum of the Circus**, started in 1984 in the rear of **Regis Amend's** home, is now on Main St. in Uniontown, PA. The collection includes models, books, posters, & props. **Frank Caine** donated clown wardrobe. The **Dennis Gilli Ring #112** of CMB was formed to preserve & display circus & carnival art. Displays will change to make use of the many items in the main collection. Contact **Regis Amend**, 794 Morgantown Rd., Uniontown, PA 15401 for more information.

## RUMBLINGS FROM THE CRUMMY

BY BRIAN NUNN

\*Like all working guys, I'd have callouses on my hands & feet, really thick, and while watering the elephants my hands would get soft enough with the soaking & I'd peel the callouses off with my thumbnail. I suppose a bath would help, but let's not get carried away! A good wash under the elephant hose & clean clothes-I'd be ready for town!

\*I've wondered if anyone thinks about the similarity between the rigging on old sailing ships & the rigging that is used on the big tops & aerial riggings? I am a fan of this kind of thing & would like to hear from anyone who knows about this stuff.

\*Another thing that I've wondered about is who owned, broke & worked the stock on the second Tarzan movie? Besides a great scene of Jane in the swimming hole, there are a lot of chimps, a big bunch of lions, all ages, & a half dozen big Asians (wearing big rubber ears to look like Africans!). But, also it looks like an adolescent rhino, with Tarzan riding him in multiple scenes (acting like he's killing this killer, running rhino, blood (catsup) & all. And another scene where a hippo goes in the swimming hole to save Tarzan from something, I forgot what. (I doubt it was trained alligators-I think they were rubber-ya think?) Anyway, the hippo's all the way in the water and comes out, walks on the land a little bit & then stops so Tarzan can fall off-all dramatically! Please, if anybody knows about this, call me collect so we can put it in Back Yard.

\*Indian Chief Seattle said, "What is happening to us now, will happen to you whites. You will be pushed off your land. (I suppose since we're poisoning our water & atmosphere, it will soon be true.)

\*Big John & Alice Walker trusted me. I think they thought I was a goober for being honest to a fault. But, anyway, after a parade in Sarasota was over, I was weighin' up the scratch. I was real short on the count & couldn't figure out where the rest of the money was. Alice started to say something like, "No kidding-OK-you can make it up later." When I found 2 stacks of bills behind the napkin dispenser, I said, "Oh, good-here they are!" She looked at me like I was an idiot! I tried to keep closer track of the scratch after that.

\*I was billing a "feeder town" one morning in Nebraska. I went into an old, framed, big front store. The owner said, "Sure, go ahead, put your posters up." While doing it I saw a stack of card-type posters leaning against the

wall. I looked through some of them; they were "old." I said, "Um, do you want me to get rid of those old posters for you?" He said, "No way! This store belonged to my grandfather, father and now me." (An' this guy wasn't young.) "We've kept all of the show advertisements since 1925!"

\*I one got a real nice "hit", a big wall full of posters on the side of a barn, next to the highway. You could see it from 1/2 a mile away. My favorite way to hang paper was to use a flour & water mix and with a big brush, called daubing, wet the wall and the paper and spread it on. (This way, once it was dry, they couldn't tear them down like with staples!) Anyway, in a city, somewhere after they tore down an old building, the building next door had the whole wall covered with Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey 1923 show posters. That's what they call "a hit." In those days, they used a railroad car to carry the bill crew and all the paper.

\*I had heard this from some animal-man years ago: Brutality does not make up for the lack of talent. The use of force is a necessary tool to be used when needed. Respect is a give & take deal. The showing of fear, large or small, in the human or the animal, is the worst enemy. But having no fear is the sign of a fool. Go figure!

All of my life I've had to work with my strength & a little bit of brain. At 11 years old I chipped mortar off demolished building bricks, with my boy scout hatchet. 1/2 penny a brick. And I had to stack 'em square on the pallet (500) or only make half wages! None of my pallets fell apart after an old railroad tramp showed me how to stack.

Anyway, I've made a living at short hoeing in the strawberry fields; planting trees on foot with a backpack & a belt with 2 pouches full of seedling pines, up & down ravines in the Pacific Northwest. But nothing compared to the demands & necessary energy it took to work elephants. At times when I felt poor an' bad, my friend H.J. would say, "I don't feel sorry for you. And I'm not laughin' at you-I'm laughin' with you! Come on, let's go take care of these elephants."

### ROMEO'S CHEAP MEAL # 2:

Take a piece of meat, sliced thin and a can of pink salmon; pour some Italian salad dressing (it's got vinegar, oil & spices) into a frying pan with enough to cover the bottom good. Throw in the meat & chunks of salmon. Cook on simmer-no hotter or it makes a mess-for about 20 minutes. Pour this into a bowl and use your favorite spice. Zatarain's Creole Seasoning works pretty good; it gives me a runny nose & makes my eyeballs sweat, but it is good!!

# THE BIG APPLE CIRCUS

BY STEVE GOSSARD

Attending the Circus Historical Society Convention in Atlanta last month I finally got my chance to see the Big Apple Circus. Everyone has told me that the Big Apple is a wonderful show, and I have wanted to see it for a number of years. This show certainly lived up to its reputation. The first of the *New Age* circuses, the Big Apple was a trendsetter when it debuted 20 years ago. It revived an entertainment industry that was struggling with an identity crisis-wanting to be progressive, yet afraid to change. Paul Binder & Michael Christensen were inspired to revolutionize the business by reaching farther back into the roots of the circus. They imported the European emphasis on quality over quantity in circus performance with a one-ring show that featured exceptional talent. The American circus has taken a new direction since the Big Apple came on the scene. Now, after 20 years of performance there is no doubt that the Big Apple has increased the public's awareness & appreciation of circus, and moreover, has proved that this approach can succeed at the box office.

Katja Schumann opened the show with a beautiful horse display. The animals were perfectly synchronized, and the lady's showmanship was superb. She was followed by *Grandma & Company* in a proud celebration of the 20th anniversary of the show. Bello Nock then came on with one of the cleverest trampoline routines that I've ever seen. It was a rare treat to see William (Buckles) Woodcock and son, Shannon working the elephant display. Bill is truly a legend in the business. The acrobatic display which accompanied this act was great. Elena Serfimovich followed with an elegant aerial display on the aerial ring. Elena is a beautiful performer. The forward somersault on the wire is one of a hand-full of tricks which can be classified as the biggest aerial achievements of this century. Very few people have ever been able to complete this trick, but David Dimitri has included this stunt in his excellent performance with the Big Apple Circus. Although it took him 3 attempts to complete the forward on the day of our visit, it was a thrill to see this legendary trick completed in a live performance. Natelie Enterline's hat & cane dance, we were told, had been substituted into the Big Apple program when another act left. This must have been a real stroke of luck for the Big Apple show, because everyone from our group seemed to think that her act was a standout. This feature could not literally be called a

dance, nor was it a juggling exhibition. It was something entirely different, performed with self-confident style and class! I saw a commercial on television recently which was obviously inspired by this act.

The Jimenez flying act was in fine form. Although they missed the triple somersault, they did catch a double twisting full layout. I don't recall ever seeing this done before. It was a big trick, and it was beautifully done.

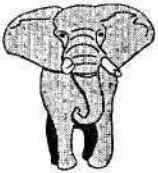
The second half of the performance started off with an overture by the band. It is always great to hear a live band, and the Big Apple has one of the best. The hand-to-hand balancing by Regina Dobrovitskaya, Melinda Merlier, Carlos Guity and Julian Stachowski was a beautiful and precise act. I always marvel at the discipline required to execute an act of this sort. This was followed by a wonderful equestrian display by Katja Schumann & Max & Katherine Binder. I had never seen an equestrian act in which a rider jumped rope on horseback as Katja Schumann did in this act-that is, with one large rope which the horse & rider jumped together. The act had a lot of lively action, and the kids were clever & talented. *Grandma* (Barry Lubin) and *Company* followed with a *Getting Fit* skit. *Grandma* has been the official mascot of the Big Apple show for many years, and it was a pleasure to watch her (him) work. The Kozakov troupe followed with a spectacular hand vaulting routine. Bello Nock then came on with one of the funniest acts I've seen, as he performed bouncing, floating, acrobatic maneuvers in an inflatable suit. Arturo Alegria finished off with a sensational juggling act that kept our group buzzing for days. This surely must be one of the finest acts of its kind. The entire company came out for the finale-a tribute to a 20-year achievement in showmanship.

By some standards today the Big Apple Circus seems to be rather conservative. They don't rely on an excess of lighting & stage effects. They still use big animals in the ring. They use a wonderful live band of musicians that play to the performers. They don't attempt to put across any heady theme or message. They believe that a circus isn't a circus unless it looks, and feels, and smells like a circus. The Big Apple is all circus, and a really great show, at that.

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The photo on the back page of #42 was from the scrapbook of Dorothy Durbin. From left: Willie Edelson, Fay Alexander, Bill Anderson, Ski Otaris, Kay Burslem, Antoinette Concello, Jeannie Sleeter, Willie Krause, Jimmy Crocker, China Durbin. Dorothy Durbin & Annie Edelson are at the top of the stairs.



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