

BACK YARD

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August 31, 1998

A CIRCUS QUEEN- ERNESTINE CLARKE RISKS HER PRETTY NECK

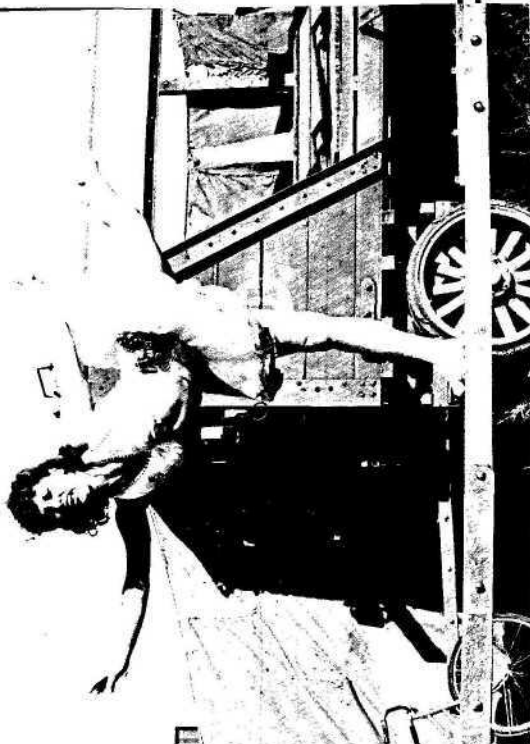
From July, 1944 *Police Gazette*-by Edythe Farrell-In The Illinois State University Archives

There's a sensation in the Ringling Bros. Circus this year. It's not Gargantua, nor an elephant ballet, nor a lion tamer. The sensation is a 21-year-old girl aerialist. Her trapeze technique is not yet perfect, & many times she misses a turn & lands in the net, but the cheers which accompany her appearance even exceed those received by more experienced performers.

She's Ernestine Clarke, daughter of a famous circus family, which goes back 5 generations on both sides. Ernie was born Oct. 17, 1923 during a New York stop-off, & bred in the best Big Top traditions. Her strong, exquisitely molded body, topped by a face that can make most movie stars take a back seat, more than makes up for the lack of her perfection as a trapeze artist. Ernie is young & easily flustered by audience acclaim.

The *Police Gazette* spotted Ernie last year & promised the readers that this year it would produce a sensation. In 1944, Ernie has her own trapeze act-The Clarkonians; she is training a horse for intricate, trick riding; & now and then, she casts an eye toward Hollywood where she did very well & hopes some day to return as a full-fledged star. I pushed aside the bed sheet which shielded the entrance to the small cubicle where Ernie dressed. In a corner stood a wardrobe trunk, there was a beach chair, a mirror & a board on which reposed Ernie's few cosmetics.

Even in this unglamorous setting, Ernie looked most appealing, as she stepped out of her tailored suit & donned a frilly, pink & white costume in which she rides astride a beautiful, white horse as part of the vision of Clown Panto's Dream in this year's colorful circus pageant. Though Miss Clarke is 21, she looks



COLE BROS. 1942

considerably younger. Her beauty is not languorous or sophisticated. Ernie is genuine-not in the obvious milkfed way, but in the subtle possession of all the outward virtues that a woman can possess. She's 5' 3" tall, & weighs 112 pounds. There is just a hint of muscular development in her upper arms. Her eyes are deep brown & she has light brown hair.

"Daddy put me on a horse before I could walk," she remarked, recalling Ernest Clarke, a bareback rider & aerialist of renown. "Mummy was a bareback rider, too & riding & trapeze flying were stunts I accepted as casually as the average kid accepts rope-skipping or

(Continued on Page 4)



BETTY ESCALANTE I

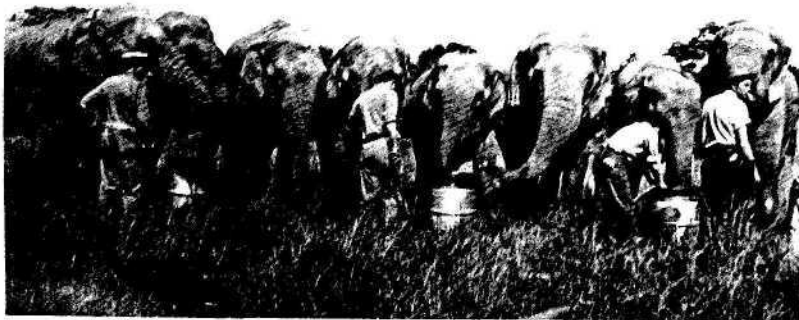
RINGLING 1955



ANTOINETTE CONCELLO

JACK EARL

Just Earl & me



BEATTY CIRCUS 1963



My dear Friends;

Their just is not one time that there is no sad news. We lost so more people from our Midst.

Chelest she was the Lady in the Moon, she was born and raised in Germany. Her real name was Heddy and she followed her husband who passed away a few years ago. She had no children of her own.

Then there was Piero Zerbin, he left behind his wife Anita, two sons three grand children and one great grandchild and one brother. He also was Tarzan and Mimi Zerbinis, and Alain Zerbinis Uncle. He was a great Performer and a very nice fellow and will be misses greatly by his Family and friends.

Dear Joann, I am looking high and low for the letter I was had to receive from you, but just can not find it. Really, I would have loved to write things about that show, I must have mislaid it. I know you were touring with Billy Marin, also that your daughter Kim Sue and her husband are on the same show with you. Penny gave me this information that you are now on the Hendrick Bros. Circus. Is Penny right it is called Bab Childress ??? As she told me it was rough in the beginning but is great now. Please let me know if the Hendricks are the once who were in 1956 with me on the King Brother Circus??? I am talking the Year it went under. Joanne, have a great season.

John Pier Theron is in a Park with his Children the same Park were Delilah Wallenda is. He has in his trailer besides his two daug an Eguana, Hamsters, Fish and two love birds. Oh by the way, J P was in Detroit also with the Wallendas, mostly Tino. He told me just to call him Irish. As I understand he will be also in Dallas with them.

Oh boy, my dear friends, I am sorry but there was no way that I could write you a letter, even now I am having lots of trouble, as my fingers hurt a lot, but it is not so bad now. two weeks ago I could not move my hands and now the doctor is telling me that I have and aneurysm in my wrist, and boy did that smart. It is now much better so I will try to get this letter out.

MIA ARNOSI OTTO went with Husband and children for a visit to Poland.

The Nocks will be working in Hong kong for Disney Festival they call them the Nocks American thrill show. The Nocks have with them Karl Winn Also

3

Venicio Wasques is performing and Petro Cario highwire and a clown from Vegas. This is besides all there own acts. I hope I have this one right, but as I said before when I got all the messages, I was in great pain.

I had quite a few different calls about my last letter, so many different people thought I was talking about them but non guessed the real name. But like the saying goes, when the shoe fits, wear it.

Parley Baer had an other stroke, but this one was not to bad. He is recovering slowly. He brought wife Ernestine back home but she is not in good shape.

Mireille Arnosi had an operation on a growth on her back and is now fine.

The Tino Wallenda Family came home for a short visit, very short visit, only two days.

Tony Dow's Mother broke her leg she is 92 and is in lots of pain. She was in her younger years one of the first Stunt women in Hollywood.

Jeany Sleeter Singleton retired now for good to and complains she is bored stiff.

Nina Unus went out of retirement to help out her former doctor for two different operations. The patient ask special for her. she was in her glory as she also is bored stiff from sitting home.

The Royal American Circus played in Palmetto to over full houses. I could not believe about the long line of cars coming to the building.

The heat here is still going on and very little rain and believe me we do need the rain.

By the way, I am reading about Guennis book of record the 8 person pyramid. Sorry, but the Wallendas did it already in 1946, with now gimmicks no net no nothing, but decided it took to much time to build it up and then take it back to the platform, so they went with the 7 and the chair.

NO NET NO ROPES, NO NOTHING.
So how can someone else do it for the guennis book of record ???

Sorry my friends you are to late

I got the video of it and the pictures, It also is in the library in Baraboo WI. If you do not believe me call or write to Baraboo.

Very sorry my dear friends, but my hands are not healed yet, so I have to quit.

LOTS OF LOVE

YOUR FOX



*****A CIRCUS QUEEN....*****

playing tag. I made my professional debut as a bareback rider at the age of 9. I probably flopped once or twice-I still do-but I'm resilient & I bounce right back. When I was 11, I worked the high trapeze. I've definitely mastered one technique-I can fall into the net easily. Now, don't laugh. Falling into the net, without breaking your neck is really an art. It looks simple, but you'd be surprised at the damage you can do. Many a serious, even fatal, accident has occurred because someone fell into a net badly."

Ernie is very serious about her work. She notes every flaw in her performance & then works on smoothing it out. Long after the audience has departed & the lights have been dimmed, Ernie swings aloft, polishing her routine. She risked her neck, many a time, in Hollywood, 'doubling & stunting for some more fortunate, but less talented actress. She got her break as a star in a movie short, "Circus Co-Ed," where she showed how bareback riders & trapeze performers got that way. "I love Hollywood."

Ernie had to go in Parade & when she returned she said, "Guess what? That crazy horse threw me & right in the middle of the ring. But, I climbed right back on again & rode him the rest of the way." She zipped out of her ballet costume & into a pair of crimson, spangled trunks & a matching top. "I feel about Hollywood the way a farmer's daughter feels about New York. The circus is my home & always has been, but no matter how exciting, thrilling & death-defying it seems, I can't help envying Hollywood stars like Ginger Rogers. Gee, she has everything."

**AERIALIST & BAREBACK RIDER
WONDERS ABOUT DOMESTIC DEBUT**

From the Christian Science Monitor, Boston

By Inez Foster-In the Ill. State Univ. Archives

Few of the thousands of circus-goers who daily watch Ernestine Clarke, 22, jump with beautiful precision to the back of a swiftly-moving horse, execute ballet figures & jump through hoops with lightning grace, realize that later in the performance, she is also one of the Big Show's most superb aerialists, equally at home on the flying trapeze. She is the daughter of Ernest Clarke, well-known English circus owner, & Elizabeth Hanneford, one of the best-known riders in circus history. She can't even remember when she first learned to ride. At 6 years of age, she had her own pony in the show; & at 9,

appeared publicly in the family riding act. At 11, she joined the family trapeze act. On the road, her father employed a tutor for both her & her small cousin, Catherine Clarke. Ballet lessons when she was a child laid the foundation for most of her thrilling bareback tricks. The dance steps she liked she would try out on horseback. It was her mother who first taught her to ride, training her in the equestrian tricks in which she herself had starred for over 30 years. For several seasons now, she has also assisted in training the featured riding acts in which her daughter appears with other distaff members of the Ringling circus family.

Backstage, Mrs. Clarke loves to sew. She makes most of Ernestine's charming ballerina costumes. Until 1942, Mrs. Clarke herself was featured as a bareback star. Since then she hasn't ridden professionally except during a short period when Ernestine suffered a slight mishap. Although she had not appeared for 2 years, Mrs. Clarke substituted for her daughter & for 10 days rode in her place. "I was quite a bit stouter naturally, but I still had my circus wardrobe with me. On only 5 minutes' notice, it was let of sufficiently for me to wear it in the act," she smiled. When the Big Show closes this year, Mrs. Clarke is looking forward to beginning house-keeping in an apartment of her own in Salt Lake City. There she will be near her daughter who was married in April to Capt. Parley Baer & when the Big Show closes in Nov., will make her winter debut as a Salt Lake City housewife.

Ernestine first met her husband when the Ringling show play Salt Lake City 4 years ago. Capt. Baer, who has now resumed the job as program director for CBS Station, KSL, which he left for war service, is holder of the Bronze Star, 7 battle stars, the Philippine Liberation ribbon & the Presidential Unit citation. He recently completed 20 months over seas. In January, he returned to America & on April 9, he & Ernestine were married. As the circus had no understudy who could replace Ernestine's skilled riding, plans for a wedding trip had to be put aside until the end of the season & at 1:30 on the afternoon of her wedding day, Ernestine was back in her dressing room, mirror in hand, makeup ready to put on, meeting as usual the exacting demands of circus life.

EVE BOSWELL PASSES AUGUST 13: Eve, born in Budapest, 1922, died of a heart attack in Durban, South Africa. She was a singing star who dominated British pop charts in the 50s. During an appearance in South Africa in 1939, she met & married Trevor MacIntosh, a circus owner's son. They then moved to England.

FRANK THOMPSON REVIEWS

“BENSON’S WILD ANIMAL FARM,”

by Bob Goldsack. Published by Midway Museum Publications, PO Box 6477, Nashua, NH 03063. 60 pages with 150+ B&W photos. Price: \$17.50 plus postage.

When I was a little boy-about 1931 or '32-my first visit to anything approaching a zoological park was a trip to Benson’s Wild Animal Farm. I fell in love with it to the extent that I eventually went on to become a zoo director as a career. This book brought back many memories of pleasant days spent in this farm during the 30s and early 40s.

Although the book says, on the title page, that it spans the years from 1927 to 1987, it also states in the early pages that John T. Benson built this 250 acre property into New England’s top animal attraction, as well as the years following his ownership when the farm became mired in other policies & subsequently failed as a result.

John T. Benson was the American representative of the Hagenbeck firm in Hamburg, Germany for many years. As such, it supplied animals to both zoos & to circuses prior to World War II. For years the farm imported, then trained, animals for such circus acts. As a result, it was well known to many circus trainers, many of whom spent time there. Among the well known trainers mentioned in this book are Mable Stark, Joe Arcaris, Franz Woska and Joe Walsh, cat trainers; Slivers Madison, elephant trainer, and a number of others. Photos show a number of oddities, including Joe Arcaris doing a hand stand on the backs of two lions.

On a personal level, I was pleased to see a photo of a small carousel pulled by both European Fallow Deer & Blackbuck antelope. I rode in this during my first visit to the farm, but when I recalled this unique ride while talking to professional zoo people, they insisted that I had imagined it, since Blackbuck “have a brain like a butterfly” and could not be trained to pull in harness. The photo proves my memory correct. Unfortunately, my skeptic friends are all long departed!

The Benson operation was, so far as I know, one of only three such self-supporting, private zoos to operate during the 20s and 30s. They were Benson’s; The Ehmler Estate Zoo in Hoosick Falls, NY, which closed in the 40s due to the war; and the Catskill Game Farm, in Catskill, NY, which opened in 1933 and is still in operation.

All in all, this is an enjoyable, though slim, book that deserves a place on every circus and animal buff’s table.

PLANE CRASH VICTIM HAD STORIED CAREER-MONTEREY, CA. -AUG. 22, SENT IN BY LORNA SABLE, BRIAN NUNN’S MOM

As a circus performer, Lorena Fernandez was a star attraction for the Flying Escalantes. She would later become an avid aviator, serving as a co-pilot in the Navion airplane that her companion, Roy Singleton, flew. On August 22, Lorena, 84, and Roy, 81, were flying to Concord when the vintage plane crashed into a hillside in Prunedale. Both were killed instantly.

“They lived life. She didn’t sit in her rocking chair waiting for people to visit,” said her daughter Louise. An accomplished equestrian as a child living in Seattle, she joined the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus in the 1930s. In the circus, she performed an equestrian act, catching the eye of Enrique Escalante, one of the Flying Escalantes, one of the better-known trapeze troupes of the time.

They eventually married & the Escalante family taught her the craft of an aerialist. She eventually was a featured performer. “The family was always the star of the circus. She was the flier & my father was the catcher,” said Louise. During the off-season, she was a dress & costume designer in the film industry while her husband was a stuntman in early movies. She & Enrique divorced & she later married Mike Fernandez. Lorena was born in 1913 in Chicago. Over the years, she became known as “The Duchess,” a nickname given her by Singleton “because he always said she carried herself with such royal grace. They were such wonderful characters. I loved to visit because they made me feel so good. They made everyone feel good,” said Louise. Together, they were members of the Navion Club & the two were en route to a club event when their plane crashed. The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the accident. Also surviving are 2 grandchildren & 2 twin great-granddaughters.

THE WAGONS ROLL AT NIGHT BY MIKE CECERE

One of the greatest experiences of my life was my years spent working on Hoxie Tucker's Hoxie Bros. Circus.

A combination of Marine Recon Basic Training, Four Year University Course & seven-month family vacation. It was a super place to grow up.

We were led by Mr. Positive Thinking himself, L.B. "Hoxie" Tucker, who often left much younger men behind in his dust with his straight ahead-hard work ethic.

His motto was if you were willing to work for it, you could be whatever you wanted to be!

And he gave a good many very, young people, myself included, their first big break in the business. I was still in my teens when he turned over several wild, untrained lions, a semi-truck and full equipment to break a lion act in 7 weeks and once that was done full authority to operate it as if it were my own.

The show was fully staffed with many extremely talented veteran showpeople who, following the true tradition of the circus, passed the knowledge of how to move just not your own department, but make it all move every day like it was supposed to.

They made you feel welcome and that you were not only an important part of the organization then but for the future. We even had a zany & colorful tribe of people with us called, "Winos", which provided a lot of brute labor to up and down the show along with some hilarious moments.

Alas, like the many Native Americans, such as the Nez-Pierce and Commanchies, this tribe was wiped out by the government. Not by horse calvary & sabers, but social workers and welfare checks. Now they are called, "Homeless" and have hundreds of people paid to look after them.

How times change, eh? I wonder where you could go today and get the same experiences? And we were just one large tent circus. There were at least a dozen then, several quite large, all doing one night stands.

It sure was a lot of work in all kinds of weather, but over 20 years later, I still think of those days when the wagons rolled at night with a smile!

WILD KINGDOM BY MIKE CECERE

Living in a small town and having the only African elephant around, one naturally gets pegged as the local "animal expert." Also, you get calls to catch every kind of wild or escaped critter which manly consists of Roy

Rogers-type round-ups of errant cows or horses in the middle of the road.

One day, while using the banks drive-thru, I noticed much excitement by the teller staff gathered around the door. I asked if there was a problem and the bank manager replied, "There is a huge turtle, menacing their exit door."

Upon closer inspection, I found a really large, economy-sized Snapping Turtle with an "attitude" blocking the door. So, like Marlin Perkins (without Jim Fowler), I got a shovel out of the back of my pickup & scooped the beast up and into the truck to thunderous and grateful applause by the teller staff.

Thus, the story spread fast about the "Great Turtle Capture", so much so in fact there were several eager spectators waiting to view "Jaws" by the time I checked in at the lumber yard.

Mr. "Jaws" was quite agitated by this time and he struck out like an alligator at the curious who dared peek over the side of the truck! Continuing on back to the farm, with the aid of a couple of my more courageous assistants, we transported "Jaws" to a stream at the far side of the property where he could spend the rest of his days in The Snapping Turtle homeland.

If only the Discovery Channel had been there to film it!

****PETER BENDALL REPORTS ON TENT & RIGGING KNOTS FROM HAMBURG****

Doing half hitches left handed: I was taught as a small child that you can only do knots "right handed" because, if you do them "left handed" the strands of the rope open up. I can't remember when I was first shown how to drop a "clove hitch" over a stake by flicking 2 loops of rope over the top with a clockwise (?) twist of the right wrist... We used to have a trapeze artist who taught us the "highwayman's hitch" which he used to tie his climb up rope to the "catcher's chair" of his trapeze rig. Before the show, he lowered his rig & took the middle of a doubled rope to the bar. In a couple of seconds, he put his hand through the loop & fetched up a loop of one part, put his hand through that loop & pulled up the second part.

Then, he pulled everything tight & pulled up the rig. In use, he climbed the one end. The other end was off to the side and as clowns, we were supposed to try & climb the other end (which of course pulled out of the loops & released the rope). I shudder to think what would have happened if the clowns had tried to pull it before he got to the top... Hopefully, his weight would have jammed the knot!

****A SHOWMAN REMEMBERS****

*****BY BOBBY HAKES*****

*I joined my first circus at age 14. I started traveling with Russell Bros.-Pan Pacific Circus in 1945. My first job was with the ring stock dept., then on to the elephants & eventually, concessions. During my career I have performed in a sway pole act for 5 years; caught a flying act; performed on the trampoline & performed other roles on the circus. For over 15 years, I was head rigger for the Frank Wirth Circus & other major circuses. My credentials include rodeos (I rode Brahma bulls & worked concessions), thrill shows, ice shows & carnivals & most of the large fairs in the U.S. & Canada. I have been concession manager for Disney on Parade, Al Stencil's Martin & Downs Circus and International Showtime Circus in Canada. I have owned my own concessions on several circuses and carnivals.

*I now live in Sarasota, Florida & rent equipment for schools, churches & private parties. I am now a real 40-miler. We have a saying in the circus, "Give a John Robinson." This means a shortened version of the show will be given. A "John Robinson" might be given when there is bad weather approaching, a long jump to the next town, a really small house (attendance wise), an act not able to perform or any of a number of other reasons. Every show uses the term, even the mighty Ringling Bros. Circus. I understand it comes from the John Robinson Circus. During the Civil War, they played both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line & frequently had to cut the show short because some town people would become unruly or they had to get out of town in a hurry for other reasons related to the war.

When a "John Robinson" is given on many shows, the audience is moved to the center seats so that the "blues," the cheap seats at the ends of the top, can be taken down & packed. The front end (the side show, booths, etc.) knows there will be no blow off (people willing to spend money when exiting the show), so they start tearing down. By the time the show was over, all that was left in the big top were the seats that the audience had used. The midway would be down & on the way to the next town.

*Have you ever heard of a Sheriff's Sale? No, I'm not talking about the one on the Courthouse steps. In the circus, after the show starts, the audience in the "blues," the cheap seats at the round ends of the top, are encouraged to move over to the red seats in the center of the tent for the sum of one-half a dollar. You move as many as you can, then you come back about 3 acts later

& turn the rest for a quarter of a dollar. You might be amazed at the amount of money that is to be made. In 1953, I was head usher on the King Bros.-Cristiani Circus. We left Macon, Ga. & gave a parade every day at 11:00 a.m. It was a good year for circuses. Our matinee was at 2 p.m. & many days we had enough people turned away to give an extra show as well as the night show.

*If a piece of equipment was not on the lot by 10 a.m., we forgot about it. No canvas, we worked open air; no seats, we sat them on the ground. In this way, the show was different than most. We never lost a show!

*We arrived at the Canadian border on the Coronation Day of Queen Elizabeth and this was the worse day of the entire season. We only had 2 straw houses! (For those not familiar with a straw house, it means all the seats are sold out so straw is spread on the ground for the overflow crowd.) That night, going into Canada, I helped with the manifest. We crossed the border with 55 trucks & 22 trailers. After 2 months on the road & some very bad roads, we crossed back into the states with 48 trucks. It was a tough tour. After the first day, we gave 3, 4 and 5 shows a day, EVERY day. We only missed one parade & that was due to Mother Nature. A tornado had struck downtown Sarnia, Ontario & wiped it out the week before. They loved the circus though & came out for 3 shows. *We crossed at Niagara Falls & played all the way to Nova Scotia & then, back to New York. We played to 32,000 people in 5 shows at Halifax, in a top the size of the Beatty show, a 130' round. We had bleacher seats, Bibles & chairs for reserved seats. I could sell 4800 people in that top. On a full house, I had 100 chairs that were mine to sell; that was my pay-off for all the work I did. As you can see, I had a good deal-we sold out every day! *More insight into life on the road. I came on the lot of the Hagen Bros. Circus in the 1950s. At that time, you were not allowed to have a vehicle on a show unless it did something for the show. I asked Little Bob Stevens for a job as a candy butcher, but he said he was full. He did say Blake needed an asst. canvas boss & after talking with him, I got the job. A few days later, Red Dingler asked me to work in a trampoline act & Little Bob gave me permission to sell my balloons off the back of the lot to the "blow-off." I was doing very well; 2 paying jobs, plus selling my own balloons. Everything was great until Bob Couls, the mgr., caught onto it. He got me aside 1 day & asked if I was going to be a butcher or a kinker or a canvas man. I told him that on a small show like this, you had to do lots of things to make it, besides, I had a car to

(Continued on Page 8)

127th EDITION RINGLING RED UNIT:
 Moline, IL-The Mark of Quad Cities-Sept. 4-6
 Kansas City, MO-Kemper Arena-Sept. 9-13
 Indianapolis, IN-Market Sq. Arena-Sept. 16-20
 Grand Rapids, MI-Van Andel Arena-Sept. 23-27
 Buffalo, NY-Marine Midland Arena-Sept. 30-Oct. 4
 Detroit, MI-Joe Lewis Arena-Oct. 7-11
 Boston, MA-FleetCenter-Oct. 14-25
 Pittsburgh, PA-Civic Arena-Oct. 28-Nov. 1
 St. Louis, MO-Kiel Center-Nov. 4-8
 Chicago, IL-United Center-Nov. 17-29
128TH EDITION RINGLING BLUE UNIT:
 San Francisco, CA-Cow Palace-Sept. 2-7
 Sacramento, CA-ARCO Arena-Sept. 9-13
 Seattle, WA-Key Arena-Sept. 17-20
 Spokane, WA-Arena-Sept. 22-23
 Portland, OR-Rose Garden-Sept. 25-27
 Salt Lake City, UT-Delta Center-Sept. 30-Oct. 4
 Denver, CO-Denver Coliseum-Oct. 7-18
 Cleveland, OH-Gund Arena-Oct. 23-Nov. 1
 Rosemont, IL-Rosemont Horizon-Nov. 4-15

BACK YARD

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KARL & HELEN WALLEENDA TENT: Gigi Tegge has designed a brand new Wallenda Tent t-shirt and it features the legendary Seven-Person Pyramid. Those interested in joining the Tent send \$5. to Mary-Jane Foote, 937 O'Sheridan St., Madison, WI 53715. Your editor has.

*******BOBBY HAKES REMEMBERS....*******
 get over the road. He looked at me & said, "You got a car & you're probably stealing gas. You're fired, get off the lot." I told this story to Mary Jo Couls, his widow, a few years ago & she thought it was awful that Bob would do that. I knew the rules & saw nothing wrong with it. It was a different time then. You could leave a show & within a day or 2, be on another with a deal as good or better. I was willing to try anything, so I did pretty well.

THE BIG "E"-EASTERN STATES EXPO OPENS SEPT. 18 THRU OCT. 4-W. SPRINGFIELD, MA
 "The Big E is a circus-lover's paradise. Hold on to your seats...the legendary, funny & gifted trainer & rider, Mark Karoly, is loose under the big top. The 1998 edition of the one ring, European style show features "Grandma", direct from the Big Apple Circus; the enchanting & talented Sylvia & her Horses at Liberty; a Romanian balancing act & the aerial artistry of the Marinoffs. Spectacular "Music of the Circus" instruments of a bygone era will enliven the Avenue ShowPlace with intricate & colorful band organs & calliopes, direct from the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, WI. Nearby, a hand-made, hand-painted, 1:48 scale version of the 1946 Ringling Bros. Circus, including 140 miniature circus wagons & 88 tiny train cars will be on display in the Hampden County Building." Those of you that go, please write and tell us about the circus. To order tickets, access www.thebige.com

WALKER BROS. CIRCUS COMING TO VIRGINIA, IL: Sept. 10, with shows at 4:30 & 7 pm. Come join the Byrd Family Tent in welcoming them to our area...**KELLY-MILLER COMES TO IL.:** Bartonville-9/25; Farmington, 9/26; Carthage, 9/27; Mt. Sterling, 9/28; Griggsville, 9/29 & Louisiana, MO, 9/30...**CARSON & BARNES IN ILLINOIS, TOO:** Come visit with the Byrd Tent members & see this great show. They are in Jacksonville, IL on Monday, 10/12.

 Alan Hollander of Syosset, NY reports that he & his wife caught the **Grimmi Bros. Circus** at Kutsher's Country Club in upstate New York. They enjoyed their presentation very much. If any Eastern fans can send more information on this circus, please do.

FORMER CFA PRESIDENT ALLEN DUFFIELD PASSED AWAY LAST WEEK IN CAMP HILL, PA. MORE ON THIS IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

******NOTES FROM BOBBY GIBBS******

Bobby is back to driving a truck and his route includes California, Texas, Iowa, etc. He misses the circus, but says times are very hard for animal people right now. While trucking thru Las Vegas, he stopped to see his brother, Casey, & caught the Ringling show. He also got to visit the farm where Siegfried & Roy keep their horses. They have a new addition to their group, a very large Belgium gelding that came from Disneyland. Bobby says he is a really BIG pet. Rosa is in Seagoville & she helps Shane Johnson with the elephants & tigers while Bobby is gone. We all hope Bobby does well with this new job, and makes lots of money!

*****TIGER ATTACKS 14-YEAR OLD IN MYAKKA CITY, FLORIDA*****

John Bantock sent in this report from the Sarasota Herald: As Alexis Yost reached into the cage to scratch the back of the 520-pound Siberian tiger, as she had done so many times before, she made a terrible mistake. She took her eyes off the cage for only a second. The tiger snapped onto her left wrist, tearing it to the bone August 22. Alexis, an aspiring wild animal handler, screamed & the tiger began to wrestle with her arm as he kept her wrist in his mouth.

Doctors used skin grafts & repaired torn tendons to reconstruct her wrist. Her mother said, "It scares me to death, but this is what she wants to do. I don't want to stop her. I do want her to be more careful."

Alexis had been spending about 5 hours a week with Andy Acevedo of Myakka City, an animal handler who uses 2 Siberian tigers in free educational programs at local schools, pet stores & museums. He's also an asst. reptile curator at Sarasota Jungle Gardens. He also cares for 2 crocodiles, 2 alligators, 8 cobras & 2 rattlesnakes. His business is unofficially called "Tiger Claw Productions." "She trusts those cats a lot. She really loves those cats. She got that from me, but I think she trusts them a little too much," he said. Acevedo said it was not a mean-spirited attack. "The tiger wasn't being aggressive; he was playing. When he grabbed her it was like a tug-of-war game. Those cats play rough." He said he will not discourage Alexis from returning to help with the animals. Her mother said, "She knows it wasn't Baikail's fault. It was hers. It was just a misunderstanding between cat and human. She knows the cats very well."

"ELEPHANTS"

If you like elephants or have a curious wonder about them, here's a new Book and Journal, by Applewhite Publishing, written over a period of 24 years by Bucky Steele of his over 55 years of involvement with them.

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VALENTINE VAULTS-FROM 1946 -THE GOLDEN YEARS OF THE BILLBOARD

From the Ringling show, Dick Miller reports: Karl Wallenda is roaming the backyard with photos from parade..Paul Jung & his atom smasher gag really brings down the house..Emmett Kelly reversing the autograph situation by having the cash customers autograph his book with a giant fountain pen he uses in one of his gags..Harry Dann, Lou Jacobs & their harem dance gag, with Henry Bedoe as the dancer, is one of the funniest of the season..Bargain sale gag is really dressed up this year with new costumes & wigs. Some 50 clowns work this number..Richard Shipley, boss elephant man, was injured while moving from Madison Sq. Gardens to Boston. He sustained a broken collarbone & is in the hospital..Frankie Saluto is missing 2 front teeth as the result of running into Louis Nagy's foot during the bargain sale gag & has lost his Pepsodent smile..Willie Krause entertains everyone with his piano playing between shows in the Manger Hotel lobby..Kitty Clark out of the show with a knee injury..China surprised all the new prop hands when he worked the flying act during Ernestine Clarke's absence..Merle Evans has added calliope to the band..Ballet girls are getting a break this year with the flying acts closing the show & the Guards number being changed to the middle, allowing some of the girls to go to the cars early..Frankie Saluto is talking about the 6-layer cake at Felix Adler's birthday party..From Oct. 12th: Big event of the week was the wedding of Willie Krause & Jeannie Davis at Dallas. The ring stock boys really surprised Jeannie at menage time. When she came out, she found her horse covered with old shoes & tin cans & a "just married" sign on his rump..Dorothy Durbin's doing a great job in Ernie Clarke's place in the flying act, working with Willie Krause & Dick Anderson..On April 21, John Ringling North announced his engagement to Jean McCormick. They plan to marry in the fall. A picture of Jean was in the Sept. 28 issue..From the Cole show, Freddie Freeman reports: A new feature is Paul Nelson working his 12 Palominos from horseback..Jack Voise is back in the flying act after 3 years overseas..Within 3 days, there were 3 accidents. Billy Powell took a buster off the wire; Harold Voise was thrown out of the net when a spreader broke & George Chamberty sprained an ankle when he missed his double..Even the girls organized a softball team and came up with some real

sluggers including Ruth Nelson, Gee Gee Engesser & Jackie Richardson. Gee Gee's parents visited in Kansas City..Visitors recently were the Felix Morales family & Mitzie Sleeter..Lucio Cristiani took a nasty buster 2 days before we got to L.A. He hit the ring curb with his knee & had to have 10 stitches in his kneecap. He'll be out about 2 weeks..From the Clyde Beatty show, Don Francisco reports: An outsider would think the circus was making a picture, with all the screen stars visiting. Clyde hosted Spencer Tracy, the Marx Bros., Amos 'n' Andy, Ken Maynard & Ray Milland. Red Skelton joined forces with clown alley & worked thru a show..The Beattys are sporting a new '46 Plymouth..Henry Kyes is learning Spanish..A new addition to the program is Estralita Escalante, doing her toe & heel act on the single trap..The ladies have threatened to report Bebe Siegrist to John Lewis because she is using a charcoal bucket in her dressing room..Clyde has been having cat trouble. Several tigers & lions are being doctored as a result of scraps in the arena which had Clyde plenty excited, but most of the customers thought it was part of the act..From Bailey Bros., Dolly Jacobs reports: Mac MacDonald's little red pup, Teddy, is like some people-always in a hurry but never getting any place..Bob Stevens is nursing a burned hand. He was inspecting the new light plant. He spotted a shiny pipe & took a hold. It turned out to be the exhaust pipe & was red hot..Modoc, Empress & Judy are the only ones enjoying the weather these days. They manage a bath daily in the blackest of mud, which has kept this writer busy with the washboard..Mr. & Mrs. Klein & daughter, Margaret, of Klein's Attractions visited recently..Judy Jacobs writes that she will be unable to join the show for a few weeks because she has the mumps..From Kelly-Miller show George Bell reports: Isla Miller knocks them cold with her new rhinestone outfit, as she & Dores work the bulls. Dores is doing a really hot dance on the wire, with the band playing the hot music to go with it..Mary Frazier was injured when she fell from a swinging ladder..At Broken Bow, there was so much mud that one of the bulls sank so far in that it was necessary to get Tena to pull her out..Obert Miller is reported to have bought 5 bulls from Art Concello, featured with Russell Bros. last year. From King Bros: Howard Waters, of the Cristianis, remarked that the rains reminded him of North Burma except for the almost unbearable heat over there..Consetta Cristiani is sporting a '46 Cadillac convertible.

*****NEWZ FROM THE ZOOS*****

THE GUANGZHOU ZOO, HONG KONG: For \$21,800 a year, animal lovers can sponsor an endangered panda-named after themselves. Cash-strapped Guangzhou Zoo in southern China is offering people a chance to name zoo animals. Sponsorship for an elephant will be about \$12,820 and a tiger \$10,260.

THE CLEVELAND METROPARKS ZOO: The Bornean orangutans have gained international recognition as a successfully managed breeding population housed in a top-notch facility. You can help improve the future for these highly endangered primate species when you become a Zoo Parent. The Cleveland Zoological Society presents a special offer to adopt a Bornean orangutan. For just \$35. you can sponsor one share of an orangutan for an entire year and receive the following benefits:

- *Collectible stuffed orangutan toy
 - *Personalized adoption certificate
 - *4" x 6" color animal photo
 - *Orangutan fact sheet
 - *Zoo Parents Night invitation.
- Please adopt this fascinating creature or any of the other wonderful animals available. For details, please call: 216-661-6500, ext. 224.

FROM CINCINNATI ZOO: Ganesh, baby elephant born March 15 at 213 pounds now weighs 608 pounds.

FROM OKLAHOMA CITY ZOO: The stork filled a tall order with the delivery of a male Rothchild's giraffe on August 8th. This is the 7th birth for mother Ursula & father Franz's 11th offspring since 1989.

KANSAS CITY ZOO & INDIANAPOLIS ZOO ANNOUNCE 1ST AFRICAN ELEPHANT CONCEPTION BY ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION: Kubwa, a 22-year old female elephant at the Indianapolis Zoo has conceived a calf by means of artificial insemination. The father-to-be is Dale, a 20-year old bull at the Kansas City Zoo. On July 24, ultrasonography revealed the presence of a 9-week-old fetus. Dale was born in Africa in 1978 & arrived at the zoo in 1994.

Kubwa is the first virgin elephant cow to be successfully impregnated, which is enormously important in terms of the ultimate viability of this technique for use in the overall captive elephant population. Most captive elephants have never had the opportunity for natural conception. Dr. Mark Wourms, K.C. Zoo director, said, "We look forward to working with others around the world to continue to make a difference in the effort to save wildlife." Kubwa's baby will, hopefully, arrive in about 20 months.

ROGER WILLIAMS PARK ZOO-PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND: On exhibit is a baby polar bear cub, weighing 40 pounds and 2 feet high back in April. This was the first successful birth for the proud parents, Trixie and Norton, popular zoo residents since 1989.

FROM THE L.A. ZOO: Thirteen chimpanzees. Not an unusual number. In the wild, they can live in troops of 50 or more. Two adult males and a dominant male who is not the breeding male. Highly unusual, and just one of the reasons that the Los Angeles Zoo's troop of chimpanzees is among the most most remarkable in the world.

Toto, age 44, the patriarch, has maintained his position as the troop's leader despite having no children. In the wild, such a male would be driven out or relegated to the sidelines by a male whose genetic line filled the troop. But Judeo, 20, the younger, more athletic, and more aggressive male, and father of six, has always looked to Toto as the leader. Toto-older, slower and weaker-can always manage to rally the support of the females in the troop when disputes arise, and Judeo has always backed down. Each & every member of the troop helps look after the children. They share their food. They play together. As soon as they moved from their former rocky exhibit to their new spacious holding area with its padded floors, Toto was like a teenage again, chasing after the children, playing hide and seek. Visit the L.A. Zoo at: www.lazoo.org

TO KISS A CLOWN-DEDICATED TO DANNY CHAPMAN BY SARAH KATE CHAPMAN

Danny Chapman was one of America's best funny men & I want to explore his model of reality as I tell what it was like to kiss a clown.

My home town had 4 unrelated Chapman families all with different backgrounds; an attorney, a floor covering distributor, a postmaster and a clown. As I met friends a couple of years after high school graduation & they learned I married a Chapman, they would candidly say, "Chapman? The Attorney?" and I would say, "No, Danny Chapman, the clown." End conversation because people can't imagine what it's like to be married to a clown. He was 53. I was 19.

People also questioned him about why a young woman would share his life. He admitted it wasn't for his money or looks, so it must have been for his character. The fascination of living with an experienced trouper that acted as my guide & mentor was at first a thrill, until I saw deeper into this mysterious, complex personality. Was Danny Chapman a real person or was his clown facade the real Danny Chapman?

Henry Robert "Danny" Chapman was born in a shack, next to the docks in Philadelphia in 1913. He had a brother 2 years older. His mother was a fine, Irish woman & his father came from a line of Jewish merchants that married gentile women. His father supported the family by becoming the world's featherweight boxing champion under the name of "Danny McCabe." Money won from prize fights enabled them to move into a rowhouse.

During WW II, the senior Chapman prospered as the partner in a dye house, coloring ladies stockings. He was voted president of the Veteran Boxing Assn. Patrnella Chapman chaired charity functions in Philadelphia & the family did well & enjoyed their prosperity & life in a country town house.

Things weren't so easy during the growing years for little "Danny." During the Depression, his father sold him for \$8.00 to a touring family who wanted to use him on top of a slender pole in a circus act. It seemed a natural thing to do & Danny said he got daily meals which his family couldn't provide. With sawdust settled in his shoes, Danny returned to Philadelphia for school, but continued to travel with circus families, making it his lifelong vocation.

He was an acrobat & comedian during his teen years, adopting tramp makeup & wardrobe. This costume is

inappropriate for youth, but in another 50 years, his body matured & his face developed character lines: it suited him well. I have to assume that because of his humble origin, he had an early insight into human emotions.

Circus lure robbed him of a high school diploma. When he was drafted into the army for WW II at age 29, after completing bootcamp, he said he had the equivalent of a college education so he qualified for officer candidate school. He landed on the North African coast as an infantry lieutenant & completed the Mediterranean tour as a captain. Danny was very secretive about his war experiences. He saw hunger, death, & destruction and knew it was either kill or be killed. Perhaps his time spent defending Italian streets reminded him of his childhood home on Tulip St., where there was a war with poverty. Putting the memory of the war behind him, he focused his attention on great works of art, architecture & music. He learned fluent Italian & German & even had a private audience with the Pope as a part of his military tour. The images of European culture became a part of his life with his favorite music being Italian opera.

Danny returned to the U.S. to find his circus job replaced mostly by Italian & German scabs who had been imported to American circuses because of the shortage of American men. These were talented people he loved & pitied, so he developed a first class aerial act with 2 partners, & he returned to Europe to work all the best circuses there. This time, he wasn't carrying a gun as he strolled the streets of Venice & Rome, enjoying the sights as a typical tourist along with his wife & daughter.

His career as a featured aerialist was probably the happiest part of his life. He used his skill as a rigger to design a rigging that people related to; a ladder that revolved. This rigging & many other unique devices designed by Danny Chapman are still in use today on most circuses. He never doubted his ability to teach, whether it was for acrobatics, aerial work or clowning. His lessons were free for the many people who asked for them.

He stayed in Europe for 5 seasons. Another daughter was born in England & then disaster struck. He fell 55 feet one night during a performance & broke his back and slept in a coma for 3 months. That ended his aerial career. He began paraplegic therapy, & defeated, returned to the U.S.

He also experienced the birth of a third daughter & a divorce from his wife. Once he learned to walk again, he choose to be a full-time clown to support his 3 daughters, & he started out on small circuses in 1963, working in

numbers as an extra. Had Danny never known that clowns are at the top of the show bill in Europe, he would not have felt the class disparity he now faced in his own country. He knew the politics of circus economics & accepted that performers were at the bottom of the wage-labor scale, with clowns & showgirls at the minimum. I entered his life as a 15-year-old student. In order to survive economically & prepare for his retirement, he needed to increase his income substantially. He couldn't do this solely on a clown's salary.

I was an economic investment for Danny Chapman & he did do financially well in the end, but the benefits he reaped from me far exceeded monetary gain. He was free to devote his life to clowning because all domestic responsibilities were lifted by me. I raised our son & daughter. He thrived on ordering & building props & practicing new routines, always confiding with me & asking my opinion. He taught me to do some basic clowning & we worked well together. We traveled most of the year.

The show was his life. From 1969-1974, on the Ringling Bros. Circus, he reached his climax as a top American clown working as a solo in front of thousands of cheering fans. Triumph of the little man made big.

The torment of injustice tore away at Danny's core. He began to drink. His second 15-year marriage ended & he aligned himself with his first family & the components of drugs & perverted behavior. His clown image changed radically & he adjusted his costume to an Auguste and his make up to a fairy-type in sharp contrast to his popular tramp character. He gave up trying to compete with big business & settled for being the little man on little shows, right back to where he had started from.

Danny Chapman died in 1983, at age 70, from a heart attack. He was mourned by friends & family, but mostly by a young, ex-wife who knew the joys & sorrows behind this funny man.

It would be easier to prove the identity of a doctor because he treats people for their ills, a teacher who gives knowledge or a parent who nurtures their young. One way to describe Danny is to say that he & Benny Hill could have been brothers. It is necessary to give some specific information on clowns because of the paradox of the name, clown. What makes a clown? A person, an animal or object? Is it the make up, costumes & funny stunts & routines (Compton's, Vol. 5, p. 410a) or the person behind the face & actions? A good clown performs in & out of his make up. Clowns take great pride in their make up & limit the colors to red, white,

black & flesh tones. Added to their make up are skull caps, ruffs, wigs, hats, costumes of a wide assortment & props including animals & musical instruments.

How many circus clowns are there? The U.S., with a population of 250 million, probably has between 160-200 professional clowns, including 40 on both units of Ringling. The balance assumes each of the remaining 100 or so circuses in this country that have a minimum of 1 clown each. There are literally hundreds of non-professional clowns active in clown clubs throughout the country, doing charity work at hospitals, churches & schools.

Clowns on the circus have their own vernacular. Their dressing room area is called an "alley." A "joey" is the name given to all new clowns until their identity is established. Their skits can be "spot-gags" done on the hippodrome track, a repeating "walk-around" or a group "entre-number."

You know you are next to a clown. You smell the talcum he dusted his face with after applying his make up. His wardrobe has a musty odor from being stored in a trunk & hung up with other costumes. He has items on his costume from the ordinary to the bizarre. In election years, Danny wore a political campaign button with his name on it. Chances are he will entertain you with magic tricks or make play animals out of balloons.

There were several conflicts present in the life of Danny Chapman. The earliest one was the Catholicism of his mother & the Judaism of his father. He experienced both the temple & the cathedral, with his mother winning out with his Catholic confirmation. His childhood friends were a mixture of nationalities & religions, but none had a blended family like his. His father's family spoke Yiddish to him. His mother's Gaelic.

This unstability heightened when he returned for each school year with adventures & travels far beyond his years. He learned it was better to say nothing than excel in classroom geography & social studies. He was bright though, & read classics where he derived most of his education. Danny read books while other children fished & played football. Books were a means of escape because they took him off to a land where life was rational & logical, not what he experienced in everyday life. He took Latin 1 year, which helped him later with German & Italian. He was a gifted musician who played the piano, guitar and mandolin.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

RUMBLINGS FROM THE CRUMMY

BY BRIAN NUNN

*Elephants on the picket line: If I go wrong on this part, sorry. It always seemed to me that with a large herd there have always been a boss and some assistants (key guys) and hands. There would probably be some producers & politician-types that would disagree with me. But those that come to mind are the likes of Walker, the Frisco operation, the Logans, the Woodcocks, Johnson, Murray, LaTorres, Williams, a few other Johnsons, Jones, Steele, Cecere, Riddle, Vito, McGuire, Scott, Gibbs, MacDonald, (this is not in order), just to name a few in my time.

All these men learned their trade from someone else, with an exception of one or two maybe. The care & safety are the order of the day. Ya-Da-Ya-Da.

and don't think the human elephant community has the animal elephant community outnumbered, but for crying out loud, don't you think (I'm taking a givin' here), that the zoo community is in accord with all pachyderm concerns. I'm taking a givin' here that there are enough pros & knowledgeable vets, to make a turn or an influence. Unfortunately, individual statements & concerns aren't much of an effect. Pretty soon it will be the paleontologist studying these animals in retrospect.

I would like to see these animals enjoyed for what they are, now! Human's & elephants have been together for a long time. I've known a lot of elephants that enjoyed the experience. There are smart ones; dumb ones; athletic ones; lazy ones; out-laws; tag-alongs; comedians & ones that generally drive you crazy (my favorite kind). By the way, they kept me busy. I always enjoyed an honest, harmless elephant, but they did get boring now & then.

You can bang your head against the wall only so many times before it hurts too much. But! By the powers that be, I think the elephants are worth it!!!

As a matter of fact, I think I'll get off my kiester & get back into the action. I've noticed that when the real elephant men are together in a barn, the wanna-be's take a back seat and, or are, tolerated. I drift a bit so here goes. The boss could sit in a chair, or on an elephant or on a horse, or anywhere for that matter and the herd would be aware of his presence. Ergo, (I like that word), the elephants would toe the line, (so to speak), for the key guys & the hired hands. I'll not go any farther at this point because the goofs wouldn't understand. (I've heard them referred to as dollar carrying darlings.) Be that as it may, I've been around some hot stock, (which, of course,

are the best kind), and felt at ease & comfortable because all company present had experience and listened to the boss. (I suppose if Clinton had good picket line manners, he'd of never got caught.) So, anyway, back to the point. Elephants in line are kept (I've learned) in order of the acts they work in. Makes the in and out go a little easier. Unless circumstances call for different location, as in tough, gentle, harness elephant, misfits and so on, so that peace can be maintained. Once again, I think that a boss elephant man is essential to good management, whether it's one elephant or 50. Thank you very much. Don't shoot me. I'm only the messenger.

*I'd heard the definition of a showman (trouper) was someone that would stay with it & help or try to do everything to get the show over the road. And that a manager meant that he could do anything to get the show up, performed, down again, loaded & down the road. With a little help, of course.

*I still like Tim's thing; one and one is two; two and two if four (and so on, this I think covers a large area.) The first elephant I saw working, out of the Kansas City Zoo, was Bubbles. At some place between Dallas & Fort Worth. I was a visiting animal man (horse-shoer), maybe looking for work. Anyway, the guy working the elephant ride welcomes me into the compound & pitches to me the pluses of workin' there. In the meantime, the elephant gets loaded up, hears the snap on the howda and off she goes; makes her round; gets back to the platform; unloads; takes on another load & away she goes all by herself again. She does this 5 or 6 times, while this boss guy is telling what a great place this is.

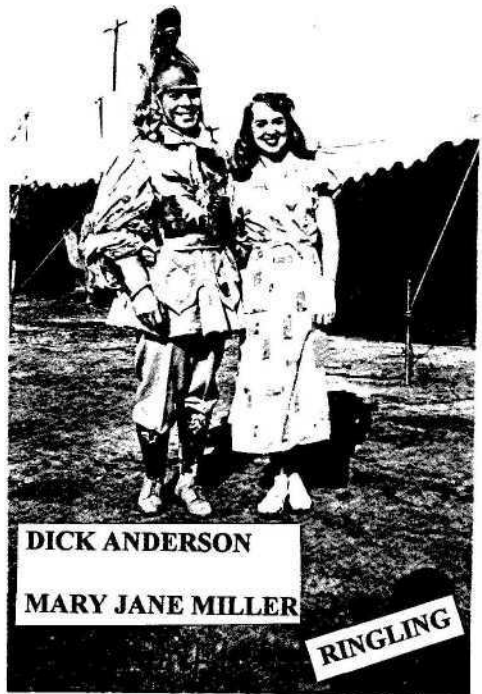
He glances at Bubbles now & then. He gets done with the pitch and goes back to work with the elephant. I was more impressed with Bubbles than I was with him. But, anyway, the park was in the process of closing at the time. The guy got a job in Hollywood later, a pretty good animal man, I've heard.

*I like it when the big guys don't cut anybody up but give the benefit of history, performance and stability. I've been weak in the stable part, but I hope I'm qualified as a good hand. Just about everybody has had bad breaks with the business, but I understand that the ones that stayed with it, & have a positive result are respected. I'm under the impression that everything that happens in the elephant community is watched very carefully by the responsible members of that community. It'd be good if the politicians looked to that group first, instead of the uninformed, egotistical, attention-wanting, no future-seeing actors & jags. Thank you for your patience.



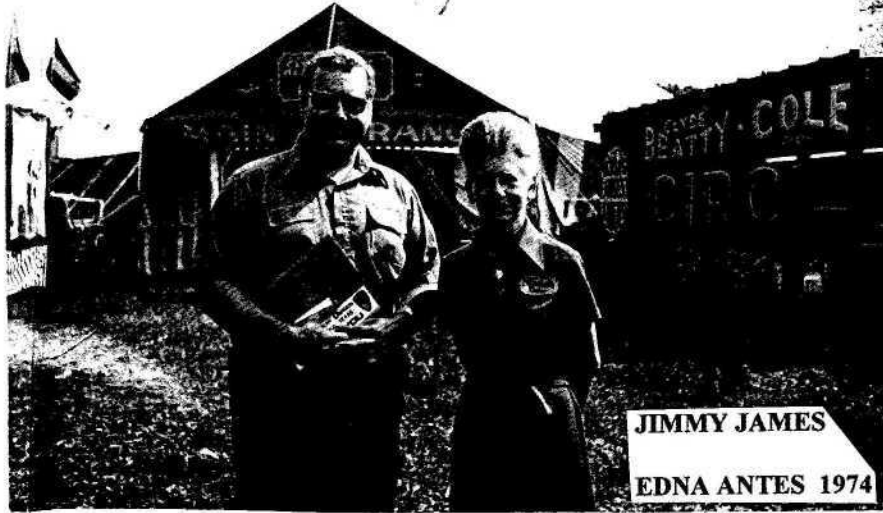
CLYDE BEATTY CIRCUS
1947

GEE GEE ENGESSE



DICK ANDERSON
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RINGLING



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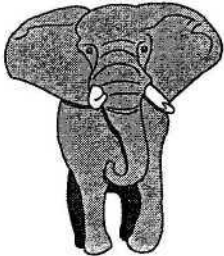


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