

# BACK YARD

Volume IV, Issue #72

July 31, 1999

## **“Humps Humberg Routed; Now Camels Walk Miles”- \*Close-Ups: Jack Joyce\* By Sam Abbott (Billboard Magazine 9/8/51)**

Jack Joyce makes camels walk miles for him. And this puts him in a class by himself, as his 4-dromedary Liberty act on Polack Bros. Circus is the only one of its kind in America today.

The camels started walking, professionally July 20, 1950, when Jack began training them in preparation for the show's opening Jan. 22. Working with green animals, he had no idea how much could be accomplished in the way of a finished act. There had been camel acts on other shows, but Jack had never seen them. Then, too, there was an opinion expressed by many that the animals were incapable of training. With an unknown goal, the humped beasts were put thru their paces for 6 & 8 hours daily.

Jack was quick to find that his charges, which he had brought from Australia with 16 others for Louis Goebel, “Thousand Oaks, Calif. animal dealer, learned much the way any other animal does. The main problem was to get them receptive to training. These ships of the desert didn't want to be launched!

Training was not started until the act had been sold to Louis Stern of the Polack organization. With the go-ahead from that showman, Jack adapted for his camels some of the tricks done by Liberty horses and some done by elephants. While the marching in single, double and quadruple files may seem to be imitations of those turns done by horses, Jack advises that doing it with camels is far different. His animals also do pedestal stands, often with more vigor than the horses.

Now that the animals are trained and well on their way in show business, Jack has no fear of the act being duplicated. And as the act is new, he knows from experience that bookers will not buy something they have never seen. When he wrote agents offering them the camel act, all answers followed the same pattern:



“Where have you played? Let's see some clippings on the act.” Jack can show reviews today, but now he doesn't need them because the act has work for the next several years!

(Continued on Page 4)



**KEN BENSON**  
Elephant Superintendent

5619 Antionette Street  
Sarasota, Florida 34232

Cellular Phone No.  
**1-941-320-9775**



## **\*A CLASS ACT\* By Mike Cecere\***

In my lifetime, I've had the good fortune to have had contact with some of the greats of our industry. And everyone you spend any time with, you learn from. What's more, people you meet when you're young really leave an impression. One man I met as a teenage-wild animal trainer was Bill Hill.

Bill Hill was the manager of Hoxie Tucker's 2nd unit, the Hoxie Great American Circus. It was one of the cleanest and well run medium-sized shows ever and no less efficient than the huge Hoxie Bros. Circus.

He had spent a lifetime in the business on all types of shows, much of the time in management positions. He was a great animal lover and all the animals on any show he was in charge of, got the best of care and food. And being interested in animals, he was curious about this teenager training lions in the back of the Winter Quarters.

Although I did not work for him, he took the time to introduce himself and welcome me to the tent show family. He made you feel like you were an important part of the operation, no matter what part you played in the show. Like our leader, Hoxie Tucker and other veteran showpeople around there, they understood it took everyone possible doing their job and being there everyday to make it all run smooth.

Want's more, I watched Bill with "his people," those that toured with him and how he treated them. He took the time to listen to their problems and gave them advice, money or just a sympathetic ear to solve their problems.

And it kept that Foreign Legion of unique characters into a cohesive unit. That's a lesson I carry with me to this day and I often think of Bill Hill and Hoxie Tucker when dealing with crew problems.

To illustrate his impact when he had to be away for surgery for several months one season, Hoxie had to bring in an equally giant personality, Jimmy Silverlake to captain the Great American show.

His legacy carries on with his son, Allan C. Hill, a very good friend of mine. Allan, one of the industries top promotional minds owned & operated the Great American Circus for a number of years before concentrating on his highly successful promotional ventures.

Allan keeps the tradition alive and gives many good season's work to quite a few show people. I know there are people that wish he was still running his show with its regular paydays and fair treatment that aren't the norm on all shows these days.

Just like his father, he's a class act!

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## **\*Nothing But Time-A Tall Elephant Tail\***

### **Part I-By Don Wixom, The Elephant Co.**

Recently, I received a note from our fearless leader/editor, Cherie Valentine. The note accompanied some photos she was returning to me. Her note contained a stern tongue lashing, admonishing me for my failure to contribute more articles to our favorite circus/show business magazine, Back Yard.

Further, there was a sidebar notice from very frequent contributor, Mike Cecere, fellow wild animal/elephant wrangler. Basically, the word from Mike was to get off my duff and write more articles, to quote the beast master, "Get in gear and WRITE some stories." Mike went on to state, matter of factly, that "now that you're up in Maine, you'll have plenty of time!"

At the close of Cherie's "barbed" note was a veiled threat that Back Yard hitman, Cecere, will "come get me." if I don't write some stories! Thus, out of sheer fear of the wrath of Mike "Knuckles" Cecere and the distinct possibility of having my subscription cancelled, I offer the following TWO PART contribution about all the "enormous" amount of time we have on our hands up here in "vacation land." Mind you, that I have inserted "tongue in cheek" for the first part of this story.

As most of you know, Maine is fondly called "vacationland" or so it says on those attractive Maine license plates. For years now, The Elephant Company (Dave and Carmen Tesch, Don Wixom and Lydia, the elephant) have trouped the South, upper Midwest and Heartland, "doing the ride grind" at shopping centers, malls, zoos and automobile dealerships. We all know what it's like, a different location every week (is this St. Louis or Omaha?) and a new "adventure" in break downs, protesters and those sweet but uninformed questions you get over and over again.

For the past 2 seasons, we have had the pleasure of spending 3 wonderful months at York's Wild Kingdom in York Beach, Maine. Ahhh, what a life-Florida in the winter and restful, beautiful Maine in the summer. Now, Mike Cecere has "let the cat out of the bag!" It's so restful up here, Dave, Carmen and I hardly have to do anything! It's like "the magic of Maine" takes over the elephant!

As Mike can tell you, in Maine, elephants never poop or pee in their truck-they merely unchain themselves & go outdoors to do it in a poop bucket. Of course, Lydia eats every strand of hay so there is no need to get up at 5:30 a.m. to clean her yard or night quarters. Naturally, she plugs in her hot wire fence after *reaching in the hay room to select only a quarter bale of timothy* at a time.

Come 9:30 a.m., whether we're ready or not, she unplugs her fence, ambles down to the ride compound, unlocks the gate and prepares herself for the ride. She brushes every piece of dirt and sand from her body, turns on the hose & gives herself a through bath. Now, dutifully refreshed, our "wonder elephant" dawns her own howdah & blankets for the ride. It's about now that our alarms of off after a long night of merry making. What? It's nearly noon-we better go see how many riders Lydia has done? *It's amazing to see her collect her own tokens, load the riders on her back & make the loops and figure eights!* Perhaps even more unbelievable is how she automatically does her show 3 times a day at noon, 2 and 4! All we have to do is wake from our nap to narrate for her as the audience cannot understand all that trumpeting.

Yes, having a "Maine Magic" wonder elephant lends itself to plenty of rest and relaxation. (Continued on Page 6)

## **\*\*Now Camels Walk Miles\*\* .....**

Had it not been for Stern, managing director of Polack's Western Unit, there would be no camel act today. Stern thought it was an excellent idea, particularly for his show. As that circus appears mainly under sponsorship of the Shrine, which accents Arabian symbolism, the camels afford an additional selling point. Stern backed up his way of thinking with a sizable sum, reported to be about \$35,000 a year. Jack went to work. The opening told what happened, except that Jack admits today that the animals do a much better act than he had anticipated. Altho he has the only act of its kind, Jack is not resting on his laurels. This is the first time he has ever carried a spare. When he handled Liberty horses, he always felt that another animal could be picked up almost any place and be made ready for the act in not more than 60 days. With camels it is different. They have to be imported and that alone takes time & money. To guard against interruptions in his act, Jack had a young camel that goes along mainly for the ride & gets into the act only occasionally. But having an understudy to a camel gives him peace of mind. Having the spare ready in case a regular can't work is worth the cost of extra feed & transportation, he believes.

The extra animal made several appearances recently when one of the cows calved. Another calf was born on the train while the show was en route from Indianapolis to Santa Rosa, Calif. earlier this year. That Jack would be the one to hurdle the barriers of endless training was not surprising. He has trained animals for 31 of his 45 years, at various times having dog, seal, elephant and horse acts. He has never attempted to train cats and ruled out chimps when one bit him years ago.

John James Joyce was born in Vienna, where his father's show, Jack Joyce's American Wild West Show, was exhibiting. This was one of the first shows to put a bucking horse or Wild West show on stage. The elder Joyce had taken his show to Europe about 1902 & its personnel included Will Rogers & Cy Compton. However, that first route was cancelled when one of the horses bucked off of the stage and into the audience. The indoor rodeo resumed its tour about 1904 and continued until 1924. Then Jack's father returned to this country to play fairs and the Keith-Orpheum Circuit with Liberty horses.

Jack Joyce was educated in boarding schools in London, Berlin and other European cities, joining his father's show during the summers. About 1920 he was allowed to handle an act of his own, but it was not until 1927 that he was featured. Jack joined Ringling in 1929, training horses under the watchful eye of Jorgen Christiansen. Soon after going with Ringling, he was assigned to take 31 head of horses to Coney Island's Luna Park, then owned by Sam Gumpertz, who also was interested in the circus. These animals were to serve as mounts for the 31-piece Czechoslovakian band that John Ringling had imported for winter concerts in Sarasota, Florida.

Continuing under the Ringling banner, Jack was with Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus until 1935. It was on this show that he met and married the former Martha Vannerson, daughter of

a bar performer & herself an aerialist. After the marriage, she forgot the traps and devoted her talent to equestrian endeavors. Upon closing with Hagenbeck, Jack joined Cole Bros. Circus as a horse trainer, leaving that post in 1937 to tour with the Al. G. Barnes-Sells Floto Circus, which brought him to the West Coast.

Jack decided to make California his home & soon he was busy at MGM Pictures where he was engaged in 1938 to handle the imported horses in the film, "Florian." In the spring of 1940, Jack realized a boyhood ambition when he bought a circus-animals and equipment of the 1938 Seils-Sterling edition. He never operated it as a complete unit, however, and disposed of some of the property to other circuses. But the stock that he kept was used in the free acts with which he toured the West.

Lure of the circus was a little more than Jack could resist. So in 1943 he became equestrian director for Russell Bros. Circus. He continued in that capacity and had his own acts on the show in 1944. When Clyde Beatty took out the show in 1945, Jack was with him. He remained with Beatty until 1947, with the exception of a year when Jack was in the Army doing chores far removed from horse training. Upon leaving the Beatty show, Jack again struck out on his own, this time with a highly successful Wild Life Show which played principal West Coast fairs. This attraction was put aside in 1948 when he flew to Australia to break high school and Liberty horses for the Wirth Circus. It was while he was with Wirth that the camel act began to jell. Goebel had made arrangements for importing 20 camels. Knowing that Jack would be returning about the time the animals would be shipped, he asked him to play nursemaid to the shipment. Jack and the camels arrived in the U.S. in June, 1950.

Within a month after landing, the camels were being put thru their paces in the ring at the Goebel farm. Those not selected for Jack's act were broken for riding & harness work in movies. The Joyces have a son, Johnny, 10, who is a finished horseman & had been looking forward to the day when he'd have his own horse act. Now that his father has blazed a new trail, Johnny's future billing may read: "Johnny Joyce and His Performing Camels."

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**George Steggerda, Holland, MI reports the line-up of the show at the Circus Hall of Fame in Peru, IN. John Fugate, Producer & Ringmaster; Bob Hurley & Pat Kelly, Clowns; Jimmy Plunkett, Low Wire; Christine Herriott Plunkett, Liberty Ponies; Larry Dean, Elephants; Lilly Esquarda Cristiana, Aerial Lyras; Armondo Cristiana, Trampoline; Dave Morcraft, Musical Director. The circus continues thru Labor Day.**

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**Dale & Evelyn Riker have been computerizing the old "White Tops" Index for the Ringling Circus Museum. They get to go thru the old issues, which brings back memories of their 40 years in the CFA. GREAT JOB!**

FOX 68



*THE FOX !!!*

My Dear Friends,

OK, this are rumors as far as I know but maybe they are true. Marcan will send a cat act next season to Ringling. The cat act from England will be going to the Beatty show. Now true stories:

Kay Rosaire is not with the black show, she is still in the park but one of her acts is on the black show.

Edith Wallenda moved up north to her daughter Rosemarie. She called me before she left and told me if she likes it she may not return to Sarasota.

Gunther Wallendas daughter is working for Ringling up north in the office. She is hired for public relation. Oh yes, her name is Liza. Gunthers other daughter Sandy just bought a new home and will be moving soon.

Ricky Wallenda is selling all his circus equipment. Royal American Circus bought some of it. Ricky is at this time very bussy going to collage. He did very well, as a student. He finished already one semester and went back to major in an other.

Tammy Wallendas lions are getting pretty big now and starting to get vicious once in a while.

John Herriott just got back from a lenghtly tour visiting circuses. He named some of them but I can not remember all of them so I will not say any of them. He also will be off soon to visit some others. He is taking a few horses up to Cathy Hanneford as she needed some replacements.

Norma Cristiani was hoptalized but as I was told is now back home and doing well.

Gilbert Fox also had to go back in to the hospital, I hope he is doing well.

Andre Prince had a double knee operation. I talked to him and he is feeling as well as can be expected. I am sure in a few weeks he will be running around like a young man.

I saw Fin Amandies and wife in WalMart, they are doing fine. Both are retired.

Now to our new winners for the Ring of Fame.

John Herriott, Blinco, Alfred Court and Trutzi.

Please help me find sponsors. John Herriott is covered. Trutzi is covered.

The other two we are still looking for sponsors.

Please spread the word around and let me know who I can contact.

So, my dear friends this is all I know for now.

Lots of Love Your Fox

PS, please remind everyone to send in your ads for the Showfolks Circus Program Book. I am in charge, also order your tickets for the circus from me. I am selling them too. Full Page: \$250; Half Page: \$150; 1/4 Page: \$75; and 1/8 Page: \$50. (Send to Jenny at: 2708 DeSoto Rd, Sarasota, FL 34234)

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Gee Gee Engesser has a correction to Jenny's last newsletter. Gee Gee, her son and daughter-in-law and grandson went on a cruise to Alaska together. They had a great time with all the beautiful scenery and the boat had beautiful rooms and great service. Gee Gee is going to Dallas for the big circus parade Ringling is putting on.

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**BRAVO! JOHN HERRIOTT!!**

**By Don Wixom, The Elephant Company**

Hats off, and, a round of applause to Master Trainer and Living Legend, John Herriott, for his "letter" to Kim Basinger. A wonderful and eloquent bit of wordsmithing from the heart. We can only hope Basinger can read! The Herriott crafted piece truly captured what, I am sure, many of us wish we could say. John Herriott, you can speak for me anytime!

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**\*\*\*CIRCUS INTERVIEWS\*\*\***

I am looking to interview people who worked with the circus before 1956 for a possible book.

I am interested in a wide range of former workers, such as announcers, clowns, cooks, side show people, managers, roustabouts, etc., who are interested in telling their story.

I will be coming to Florida this winter to make interviews. To schedule an interview

at this or another time, please call or write: Scott Riseng

4244 West 50th St.

Cleveland, Ohio 44144

Phone: 216-351-8832

E-mail: ja300@cleveland.freenet.edu

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## "Nothing But Time-Part I".....

Carmen can spend her hours of leisure time shopping, going to yard sales & the beauty shops; Dave spends endless hours fishing and on the Internet. Of course, I hardly have any duties at all-so I suppose Mike was right-I needed to write more articles for Back Yard with all my oodles of free time!

At the close of the day, Lydia turns in the tokens, brings home the receipt & walks the block and a half home to our compound, without touching a car antenna or pick up truck along the way.

All of us know what a chore it is to pick up all that animal food-hay, grain, fruit, veggies and bread. What a stitch it is indeed to see Lydia driving our semi out to get hay; we worry however, as she hasn't taken her CDL test yet. Lydia stacks the hay OK, but she can't back up the truck with a crap!

Evenings at our compound are the best, we eat steak and lobster every night while Lydia mixes martinis for us-always shaken, never stirred! Yes, we miss the "Magic of Maine" when we once again hit the road, working our way home to Florida. We don't have nearly as much "free time."

I sure hope Mike Cecere can come over & visit us during our stay here! But Mike, bring your own lawn chair, suntan lotion and a good book so you don't get bored. Now, if you believe this tall, twisted elephant's tail, I have a bridge in Brooklyn and some swamp land in Florida I'd like to sell you.

I hope my "gentle" rib poking hasn't upset our fearless editor or Mike "Knuckles" Cecere-thanks guys for being good sports! My thanks also go out to Dave Tesch who inspired the idea for this story, and to both Dave and Carmen for helping to dream up this yarn.

As Paul Harvey says, "and now the rest of the story," Part Two of "Nothing But Time" will detail what a "real" day is like for us here at York's Wild Kingdom. Oh, and by the way, please drop by and see us if you're near southern Maine or south New Hampshire! We enjoy cutting up jackpots with show folk and fans alike. (Thanks, Don. So, how did you like this, "Knuckles?")

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## "RED NOSE REVIEW" By Dale Riker

Put three great professional clowns in a big top on the lot of the Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee and you have "the shortest half hour that I can remember," said Fred Pfening, Jr.

One of the best free attractions on the Great Circus Parade Lot in Milwaukee was the Red Nose Revue, produced by Mark Renfro and starring Dick Monday, Tiffany Riley and Barry Lubin.

The show is opened with Barry Lubin in his Bar Mitzvah uniform, who is joined by Tiffany to move the crowd in the kid screaming contest. When Dick comes out he has no one to appeal to except the front door which has been emptied. Dick Monday then does his pull-a-way table

cloth bit, with a little help from Barry to increase the tension. Barry then starts to announce his dancing act & is interrupted by Tiffany with the Music Box that eventually is trashed by Barry to a crescendo of boos, and the little girl at one performance who said to him, "You're a mean person." As you know, it ends with garbage can music.

Dick does his juggling act with balls, cigar boxes & a cigar box pyramid, balanced on his chin. Tiffany does a 3 legged dance with the appropriate music and her unique choreography.

Barry Lubin then comes out and does his Grandma routine with popcorn and all the trimmings. If you have seen it, you know it well.

The finale is lip sync to a song not in my repertoire, but is well received by the kids and the house rocks when Dick and Tiffany join him in the dance routine.

Words have never been able to translate from the visual, so you should have been there to see and appreciate. The consensus was that it was the Best Kid Clown Show for Adults in a long time.

(Dale writes that "this year was even better as my wife, Evelyn, was "The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe." The Hanneford show was great and the Parade grounds were spectacular." Thanks, Dale. Let us know about the Peru Annual Festival and Gunther's induction.)

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Ron "Toto" Johnson, Davenport, IA reports Javier Gomez, known professionally as "Valentino", set a new Guinness world record July 12th at his home in Bettendorf, IA. "Valentino" ascended a 5/8 inch steel cable stretching 61 1/2 ft. into the air at an unbelievable 44 degree angle. The previous record, unbroken for 20 years, stood at 57 ft. at a 37 degree angle. He broke this record without the aid of a balancing pole or any safety device, taking just 2 minutes to make the climb.

A film crew from the Fox TV show, "Guinness World Records: Primetime" was on hand to document the record setting feat for an upcoming broadcast in August or Sept.

He actually walked the incline wire twice so the film crew could record from various angles & capture reactions from the crowd of about 150 onlookers.

Originally from Cali, Columbia, "Valentino" began walking the wire 33 years ago at age 14. Since then he has traveled the world performing & has worked in TV and movies. He was a body double for "MacGyver." In 1980, Javier set the record for jumping rope on the high wire-54 consecutive times on a wire 33 feet in the air. Javier Gomez can be reached at "Valentino's Circus Performers' Agency", 723 Lincoln Rd., Bettendorf, IA 52722. Phone: 319-355-3650.

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OLD PHOTOS TO SELL?? CONTACT CHERIE

## *\*Reflections On The Old Place\**

### **"Compound-Broke Part II" By Roger Smith**

When Mabel Stark saw me approach her cage line, she had a lot on her mind, not the least of which was her dread of being turned out. Would I be just the newcomer to throw in with the office and scheme to usurp her? Beyond this question, she could reflect on the history of the true master trainers she had worked with, learned from, and even if grudgingly, deeply respected. She could look back on her Barnes show origins she carved out the hard way on history's most important trained wild animal circus, which then was oppressively male-dominated. Her memories scanned the multiple critical injuries from tiger attacks she recovered from, and centered on her many determined returns to Center Ring. At the Compound itself, she had seen them all come and go-the would-bes, the wannabes, the desperately hopeful who found out they didn't have it, the truly capable, who, in this hard-bitten, forbidding profession, succumbed to the cruel discovery that they would never enjoy a career approaching the shadow of the Tiger Queen. This, and her lasting celebrity as a circus legend, came to focus when she turned to see a young, stout, Beatty-broke cage-boy, clean-cut and with all his teeth, walking up on Doc Hayden's direction to participate as a prop-hand in her show. The Old Sister sure as hell didn't like it very much.

Louis Goebel was born November 15, 1896, in Buffalo, New York, to Louis C. and Mary K. Goebel, owners of a meat-packing concern. Young Louis earned what was to become prophetic for him when he left home-meatcutting, for in 1919, he departed the winters of New York for sunny Southern California. He arrived at Gay's Lion Farm, then in Hollywood and got on as meatcutter. Gay re-located to El Monte, but Goebel stayed on with friends in Hollywood. In 1920, he moved into the keeper's job at Universal Studios, for their animal collection. This tenure ended when "Uncle" Carl Laemmle, head of the studio, who in 1933 piloted the production of Clyde Beatty's *The Big Cage*, decided in 1926 to dispose of the fine animal collection the studio held. Goebel at once saw an opportunity. He'd saved his movie money carefully and made an outright purchase of 6 lions: Andy, Min, Bill, Momma, Poppa and Little Caesar, the cat he used for his first commission. Thus, Goebel's Lion Farm was begun in 1926, but Los Angeles County refused him a permit for wild animals. He then turned to the 3-year-old settlement of Thousand Oaks, in Ventura County. The tiny community was foundering and for land that once sold for \$1000 an acre, Louis bought 5 lots for \$10. His original land investment was \$50. His animals had a home.

Uncle Ben told me he had been through 11 managements since he arrived at the Compound, in 1933. These included the repeated instances when Louis Goebel had to reclaim ownership when others failed to prosper.

By the time I arrived, the Compound had seen endless success in films and had employed most of the top trainers of every kind of animal. Louis Roth was the best of them. They included

Rueben Castang with his chimps, John "Chubby" Guilfoyle, who was Beatty's second mentor, and who schooled Pat Anthony, Dick Walker, Joe Horwath, Stephano Repetto, all on cats; the immensely successful cat man, Mel Koontz, who became a great friend and mentor of mine after his retirement; Howard Bryant, Jo and Slivers Madison, Mac and Peggy MacDonald, Bert and Marie Pettus and an endless list of others I'll partially cover progressively.

As I came on, Chet Juszyk, Jungledand's Head Trainer, had been critically injured performing his major lion act. Uncle Ben was the mainstay on cats. Eugene "Arky" Scott, another man who mentored me extensively about animals, was Elephant Boss, capably assisted by George A. Young. Chuck Hayes worked hoofed stock and Case Voorn was training bears. Dwayne LeBeau had a seal act, Norman Pitchford enjoyed his corny act working the goats, Jim McLellan was our announcer and PR rep and Henry Tyndall trained the featured chimp act, while his brother, Norman, was respected as a camel trainer. Indeed, they had all come and gone at the Compound and some of these recent names were not to last. Our training staff was aging. As I wrote before, I had a foreboding sense of getting in just at the last of the Old Place. I never shook the feeling, and tragically, I was right.

This scant overview of the business history and the long, impressive list of the great masters, was part of what was on Mabel's mind when this latest, un-proven cage-boy arrived to work her show.

"You there," she imperiously intoned. "What the hell are you doing coming over here?" she demanded. I knew I was being given the business so I didn't flinch. I looked her straight in the eye, but politely and held the glance.

"Doc Hayden says we all help on props. Part of the job."

"Oh, he does, does he?" she said, staring right into my glance. "Well, we got enough prop guys around here so, don't come around. Don't come around my arena. Don't come around my tigers, never. You aren't needed around here."

The other guys around her were clearly embarrassed and turned away. I held my direct glance at Mabel and everyone was awaiting my response. If I had given her a hard reply, I obviously would have killed it with her for good, certainly also with Uncle Ben. I was being tested, sorely for sure, but it was part of breaking in the hard way, like she'd had to do, among all those veteran males on the Barnes show, in 1911. I wasn't about to unleash invective and bury any chance I had, so I shifted my posture and returned my glance to her a little longer than she expected. Into the eyes which had cowed many a tiger and show owner, I allowed a respectful nod and quietly replied, "Very well, ma'am." And I turned and walked back to my string and watered along the cage line. I'd been introduced to Mabel Stark.

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**Paul Holley reports** they went to the Parade Grounds in Milwaukee to see the **Hanneford Circus** and the **Red Nose Revue**, a free kids clown show. A great afternoon's entertainment! They could not attend the Parade because of their church picnic.

**RINGLING RED:** Anaheim-Arrowhead Pond: 7/27-8/3; Inglewood-Great Western Forum: 8/5-8; San Diego-Sports Arena: 8/11-15; Oakland-Arena: 8/18-22; San Jose-Arena: 8/25-29; San Francisco-Cow Palace: 9/2-6; Sacramento-ARCO Arena: 9/9-12; Seattle-Key Arena: 9/16-19

**RINGLING BLUE :** Dallas, TX-Reunion Arena: 7/28-8/8; Fort Worth-Convention Ctr: 8/11-15; Colorado Springs, CO-World Arena: 8/18-22; Wichita, KS-Coliseum: 8/26-29; Moline, IL-Mark of the Quad Cities: 9/2-5; Kansas City-Kemper Arena: 9/8-12; Indianapolis-Market Sq. Arena: 9/15-19

**CARSON & BARNES CIRCUS:** Adrian-8/1; Marshall-8/2; Sturgis-8/3; Otsego-8/4; Benton Harbor-8/5; Niles-8/6; LaPorte, IN-8/7; Nappanee-8/8; Warsaw-8/9; N. Manchester-8/10; Logansport-8/11; Frankfort-8/12; Brownsburg-8/13; Lafayette-8/14; Rensselaer-8/15; Watska, IL-8/16; Streator-8/17; Havana-8/18; Galesburg-8/19; Ft. Madison, IA-8/20.

**UniverSoul Circus:** Cincinnati, OH-Swifton Shopping Ctr.-7/28-8/1 (Thanks to Don Sandman for this route); Nashville-8/4-8; New Orleans-8/11-15; Birmingham-8/18-22; Cleveland-8/27-9/5; Detroit-9/8-15; Chicago-9/22-10/4; St. Louis-10/7-10; Kansas City-10/13-17; LA-10/22-11/3; Houston-11/9-14.

**Circus Smirkus:** W. Tisbury, MA-7/31-8/1; S. Dartmouth-8/3; Groveton, NH-8/5; N. Conway-8/7; Montpelier, VT-8/9-10; Barton-8/12-13; Greensboro-8/15. (Thanks to Chuck Elwell for sending these routes in.)

**Wenatchee Youth Circus:** Lake Samamish-7/31-8-1; Clark County Fair-8/6-15; Peshastin-8/22; Federal Way-8/27-29. All Washington State. Their 47th Season!

### BACK YARD

is published twice monthly-(15th & 30th) by Cherie Valentine, 1522 Clinton Blvd., Bloomington, IL 61701. Ph. 309-828-0737. FAX, at work: 309-438-5378. cdvalen@ilstu.edu. Subscription rates are \$25.00 per year, for 24 issues, within the USA. Advertising rates, payable in advance, with your copy, are: Full page \$30; Half page \$15; Quarter Page \$10; 1/8 page \$5. "The Fox," is written by Jenny Wallenda. Other material is written by Cherie Valentine, unless otherwise identified as to author. Comments by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher. Back Yard is a pro-circus, pro-animal publication, which supports the use of animals which are legally held and properly cared for, in the American circus.

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

**Garden Bros. Circus:** Oshawa-8/13-15; Peterborough-8/17; Owen Sound-8/19; Barrie-8/21-22; Orillia-8/24-25; Kingston-8/28-29; Belleville-8/30-31; Orangeville-9/2.

**Circus Vargas:** San Fernando, CA-7/29-8/1; Santa Maria-8/2

**Joel E. Warner Top Picnic,** hosted by Dorothy Herbert Tent, 8/14-Howell, MI. Program includes Paul Butler. Call Pat Pagel 517-546-9681 for information.

**Martin Downs Ring-Fred Logan Tent Joint Meeting:** 8/26 in Strathroy, Ont. Keller-Miller Hospitality Day with coffee & donuts served at 7 a.m. when circus arrives. Reception for their own Barry & Karen DeChant.

**David "Deacon" Blanchfield Ring 86** show at the Penn. Railroad Museum, Strasburg, PA-8/19-21.

**Greenburg Train Show-Edison, NJ-8/15-16.** "How-To" Demonstrations by John W. Pugh Ring 96, Expo Ctr.

**Clifford Vargas Tent 147** reports Happy Time Circus was recently at the San Fernando Valley Fair. 3 generations of Twomeys performed. Dave, "Happy The Clown," Ken, "Krazy KoKo The Klown," and Jerrod, "Ken Kelly" performed his rolling globe act. Dave has clowning for over 50 years & has owned Happy Time Circus for over 35 years. Ken has been performing for over 25 years. He is now also tent boss. Jerrod began his career at the age of 3. He recently turned 13! They also recently performed at a private party & featured Barbara and Sylvester Braun with their Western Roping Act. The Tent held their June meeting at Circus Vargas & fed the show! Featured were Pollo Loco Chicken, V.K. Paieja, Sicard Special Salad & Deviled Eggs Ala Jane. Chip Arthur and the elephant were probably the favorite of the audience. Chip's wife Diana presented an Ian Garden trained pony act. It was beautiful. This year's show is a winner! Don't miss it!

### \*A SPECIAL INVITATION\*

**From the Joel E. Warner Top No. 20  
Circus Fans Association  
To Join An Active Organization**

**Dues For The Joel E. Warner Top  
Are Based On A Family  
Membership...**

**Annual Dues Are Only \$10.00**

**PLEASE JOIN AND BECOME PART  
OF THE FAMILY**

**Return To: Jim Fry  
701 Cumberland Dr.**

**Eaton Rapids, Michigan 48827**

**Join Us For The Upcoming Season!!!**

### \*\*\*News From Our Circus Friends\*\*\*

**Ned Kronberg** reports the Milwaukee event as extended by 2 days on the train trip and 1 day in Milwaukee. The train trip was a huge success with the train going from Baraboo to Janesville, then on to Oshkosh, Appleton, Green Bay and then back thru Appleton, Oshkosh & then to Fond du Lac. The response was tremendous along the route this year. In Milwaukee, we had to set up in 2 days instead of the normal 4, but all was ready come opening on Tuesday. Had good crowds all week long. The highlight of this year was the newly refurbished Hanneford wagon, which shown like a gem with its newly applied gold leaf and the rest of the wagon collection was also the best it has looked in many years. The Milwaukee event is always a great get together for all the participants and seems to get bigger every year. (Thanks, Ned.)

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**Nicole Wright** reports she, Shane and Wayne are busy at Illinois State Univ. with the **Gamma Phi Summer Circus Camp**. She says **David Zoppe & Susan** will be at our McLean County Fair here in Bloomington. At the Illinois State Fair will be **Tino Wallenda** and family on the high wire. Shows will be at 4 & 8 Sunday-Friday and 12, 4, 8 on Saturday. There will also be racing pigs throughout the day. **Lee & Judy Stevens'** Baboon Lagoon will have shows at 4, 6 and 8. **Debbie & Emil Goetschi** has the Wild West Follies-shows at 2:30, 4:30, 6:30. Fair days are Aug. 13-22 in Springfield, IL.

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**From "The Morning Mail-Journal Sentinel Readers"-July 18: "Circus Animals Well-Cared For."**

The sincere but uninformed writer of the July 13 letter, concerning treatment of circus animals, needs to know those animals are among the best-cared for animals in creation.

Though I currently work as a counselor/teacher in a private high school, I worked on the road for several years for a five-ring circus that carried more than 80 animals, including 20-plus elephants in its menagerie. I saw firsthand the care circus animals received and I witness caring and humane treatment today when I visit shows.

Circus animals must be well-treated since they are valuable performers. The circus-going public sees them on display every day. Government inspectors visit circuses to make sure animals are properly housed, exercised and cared for. Animals are often the circus owner's most valuable asset.

Circus has been part of Americana for centuries; it's entertaining & educational. Where else can kids in small towns see exotic animals up close, in virtually their own backyards? I urge you to visit the circus, take a kid with you and see for yourself the scrupulous care these contented animals receive.

**Ken Holehouse, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.**

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**Dick Reynolds**, of Lebanon, NH, reports he visited **Ken "Turtle" Benson** July 14 & had a grand time. He has quite a come in and during intermission, he had a steady flow of riders. His center ring spot with "Boo" is a very different presentation,

sprinkled with comedy batter with the ringmaster and very well received. This act & ride area show a great bond & caring between man and beast. Ken and Boo are certainly an asset to the business. Turtle also presents a nice, long-reign pony spot in the show. The whole performance looked good & they had a good house to show to. Happy performers & customers make for a great time. There were no PETA people around for this date, but Ken said it has been rough with them at some dates this season.

On 7/13, the closing act, **Jenzac's** high wire motorcycle, the rigging failed & **Angela** suffered an ankle injury. This happened at the performance attended by some of the **Big Apple Circus** folk and they assisted to the accident. Ken said without thinking twice, the **Big Apple** members were out of their seats, into the ring to help. Being there for each other is what the "circus family" is all about.

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**Bob Kitchen** reports **Beatty-Cole** had mostly good stands in New England. Good business in Portland, Maine, with no kids or discount tickets. **Big Apple Circus** had good business in Charlestown, Rhode Island. **Circus Smirkus** is playing its annual New England route. Bob said he thinks they have a bareback act for the first time and the show is great, with a Robin Hood theme. **Bentley Bros.** is also in the New England area. They played New Bedford during the heat wave, but being sponsored by the police, they usually do well. (Thanks, Bob)

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**Heidi Herriott** reports **Frank Mellen** had surgery July 23 at St. Joseph Hospital in Joliet, IL. Frank writes circus poetry for "**Circus Report**." Please send your get-well wishes to: 16121 Serenity Dr., Plainfield, IL 60544.

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**\*\*\*NEWS FROM THE LOS ANGELES ZOO\*\*\***

The newest addition to the chimpanzee troop is resting comfortably in the nursery where he is living with another baby chimp after being removed from the group. The healthy, 4-pound baby boy born 6/14 to Regina, 15, was moved without complications. Nursery keepers began bottle feeding infant formula to the newborn, who took to the bottle easily. The baby was given a plush toy chimp that was rubbed on his mother for her scent to help him adjust to the transition. He shares a room with 6-week-old Jean, who was taken from her mother, Gracie, and moved to the nursery 3 weeks ago. When the babies aren't asleep, keepers hold them. This one-on-one contact is important for their development because infant chimps constantly cling to their mothers & sometimes do so for up to one year. The decision to remove the babies from the 13-member troop was made following concerns that young males were taking infants from their mothers.

In May, 4-month-old Toshi died in the exhibit after she was taken from her mother, Yoshiko, & fatally injured by juvenile male chimps who were roughhousing with her. Jerrard, 9, appears to be taking control of the group from Judeo, 22.

**"DOC, MY TIGER'S GOT AN ITCH"  
BY JOHN MARTIN, D.V.M. -A Review**

*By Cherie Valentine*

I, like many of you, waited too long to write for this book! Thanks to subscriber Lonnie Tuckwiller, who sent me the book after Jack Martin passed away, I have spent many nights enjoying Jack's memories. A note from Mary Helen, Jack's wife, said she has given Jack's books to their daughter, Terri, to sell. Mary Helen said, "thank goodness for friends like Gee Gee, Jenny and Coco and Hazel." On July 17, Mary Helen went to Cedar Knoll Mall to be with Coco, Coconut and Hazel while they were selling their dolls. Terri Martin Klaiber has a web site at [www.wwd.net/users/tklaiber](http://www.wwd.net/users/tklaiber). This page includes a memorial to Jack, combining his web page and publications. Terri says, "To everyone who has been so supportive, my mother and I thank you deeply. There is a great void in our lives & we are trying to carry on in a manner that will help perpetuate his 'story.'" Let me tell you, the pictures are worth the price alone! These include Gee Gee with her Alaskan dogs; Rudy Dockey & his Boxer dogs; Mills Bros. Clown Alley 1959; Coco, the Clown; Doc Henderson; Bucky Steele with his bears; Anna May on Sells & Gray-1963; Wally Naughton's bears; the Kirby chimps; Charlie Allen's bears/zebra and Saxton's Riding Act! An extra plus is photos of Doc Martin in his clinic with circus animals. To quote Terri's home page the book is "the life of well-loved circus vet John Martin, who traveled with Ringling Bros. Circus among many shows-becoming a pioneer of exotic animal medicine. Included are stories of ailing lions, tigers and bears that Jack treated as well as anecdotes of circus greats: pioneer circus vet J.Y. Henderson, elephant trainer, Hugo Schmidt and tiger master, Charly Baumann and the first Lady of American Circus, Gee Gee Engesser. Clowns Otto Griebing, Lou Jacobs, Mark Anthony, Freddie Freeman and CoCo are part of the story, as well as such greats as the Flying Wallendas." The 205 page book is \$22.95 plus \$3.50 shipping and handling. Kentucky folks please add \$1.37 tax. Make checks payable to Teresa Klaiber, 22937 Long Branch Rd, Rush, KY 41168. Enjoy!!!

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**Animal Experts Representing Livestock Production,  
Farming, Science & Pets Petition US Senate to Focus  
on Terrorism. (From Heidi Herriott)**

Radical groups espousing animal rights and environmentalism now dominate mainstream movements that in the past promoted animal welfare & conservation. Some of these radical groups use terrorist tactics to achieve their political ends; their method of operation includes violence, intimidation, arson, theft & other crimes against biomedical researchers, furriers, hunters, trappers, dog & cat breeders, livestock farmers, zoos, circuses, rodeos, exotic animal breeders & related enterprises. The time has come to say no to the terrorists who hold legitimate animal interests hostage to extremist ideas & to stand together against these offensive & intolerable assaults.

Concerned citizens can write the **National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA)** for more information at PO Box 66579, Portland, OR 97290 or FAX: 503-761-1289. Or e-mail: [73314.263@compuserve.com](mailto:73314.263@compuserve.com) or visit the NAIA web-site: [www.naiaonline.org](http://www.naiaonline.org). They also want the government to look into "the tax-exempt status of these animal rights groups that advocate, fund or engage in criminal activities to further their political goal." You can also contact Heidi at: 522 Buckhaven Loop, Ocoee, FL 34761 or [circus4u@gdi.net](mailto:circus4u@gdi.net)

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**Mickey King**, former aerialist supreme, was treated like royalty at the **Circus Hall of Fame** in Peru, IN last Saturday. She raved about seeing the **Peru Children's Circus** and how wonderful the CHF show was. A special treat was meeting **Gunther Gebel Williams** and receiving an autographed photo of him. It brought tears to her eyes when Gunther told her of how many years he worked with her sister, **Antoinette Concello**. Mickey said the buffet they served at the Hall of Fame was out of this world! They had ham, beef, chicken, fish, salads, vegetables and great desserts! It was hot eating under the tent, but she had young ladies fanning her so she could eat! So, thanks to all of you in Peru that made Mickey's day so special. Her birthday is August 6th and I believe, she will be 95 years young. She would enjoy cards at: 1 Plaza Dr., Plaza Trailer Court, Peru, IN 46970.

*NEWS FROM THE ZOOS*

**San Diego Zoo:** 3 Indo-Chinese tiger cubs were born June 23-a first of this species born at the zoo. The babies are being cared for by first-time mother, Danai. Visit their web site at: [www.sandiegozoo.org](http://www.sandiegozoo.org). You can also see photos of Tatu, the baby gorilla born 11/3 to Jessica, 18, and Mamba, 28. Sometimes Jessica will bring the baby to the window for public view. **\*\*Woodland Park Zoo-Seattle:** 6/10/99-Zoo Announces Its First-Ever Elephant Pregnancy. Chai, 20, is currently living at Dickerson Park Zoo in Springfield, MO where she was sent last Sept. on a breeding loan. Chai will return after the summer & is due November 2000. Her mate is Onyx, 36, 12,000 pounds, 9 ft. 6 in. Chai is 8 ft., 7300 pounds. WPZ has all female elephants: Bamboo, 32; Sri, 19, both Asians and Watoto, 30, African. At Dickerson Zoo, Chai lives with Moola, Patience and Kala, Patience's 1-year-old male calf. The public's enthrallment with WPZ's elephants can be traced back to 1921 when an Asian cow named Wide Awake was purchased thru children's donations & the Seattle Post. Wide Awake lived at WPZ until her death in 1967 at 54 years old. You can see Chai's ultrasound of the baby at [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) and go to Press Release Page. **\*\*LA Zoo:** 7/20: A preliminary necropsy revealed a basketball-sized tissue mass inside the abdomen of a 5-month-old giraffe, Bariki, who died 7/18. There were no visible signs that he had this mass of tissue inside him. He weighed 350 pounds, the mass weighed 28. "This may have been something he was born with," said Dr. Lamm, Zoo vet. Bariki could easily be distinguished from his half-brothers because he was born with a crooked tail.

\*\*\*NEWS FROM OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS\*\*\*

Dale Leddy writes that the Joy Maker Clown Alley, with him as "Grandpa Sparky" will be visiting a nursing home, entertaining an National Night Out Party and will end up with a parade at Carmel Valley Village on August 7th. "We always have fun and for this week, we have a little more." He has sent along this proclamation from President Richard Nixon from August 7, 1971.

**National Clown Week: By the President of the United States of America. A Proclamation:**

Whoever has heard the laughter of a child or seen sudden delight on the face of a lonely old man has understood in those brief moments mysteries deeper than love.

All men are indebted to those who bring such moments of quiet splendor-who redeem sickness & pain with joy. All across America, good men in putty noses and baggy trousers, following a tradition as old as man's need to touch gently the lives of his fellowman, go into orphanages & children's hospitals, homes for the elderly and for the retarded, & give a part of themselves. Today, as always, clowns & the spirit they represent are as vital to the maintenance of our humanity as the builders and the growers and the governors.

In the folklore of the world is the persistent claim that the heart of a clown is sad, and that all the gladness he provokes is simply a facade for the pain he cannot reveal to the world. In the myth is the kernel of reason: the clown leaves happiness where he goes, and takes misery away with him. Yet, we cannot suppose there is real truth in the myth. For surely the laugh-makers are blessed: they heal the heart of the world.

To call public attention to the charitable activities of clowns and the wholesome entertainment they provide for all our citizens, the Congress by a joint resolution approved Oct. 8, 1970 (Public Law 91-433), has requested the President to designate the week of August 1 through August 7, 1971, as National Clown Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICHARD NIXON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of August 1 through August 7, 1971, as National Clown Week. I invite the Governors of the States and the appropriate officials of other areas under the United States flag to issue similar proclamations.

I urge the people of the United States to recognize the contributions made by clowns in their entertainment at children's hospitals, charitable institutions, institutions for the mentally retarded, and generally helping to lift the spirits and boost the morale of our people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-one, and the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred ninety-sixth. *Richard Nixon*

Kent Ghirard, of Honolulu, reports the girl in the photo on

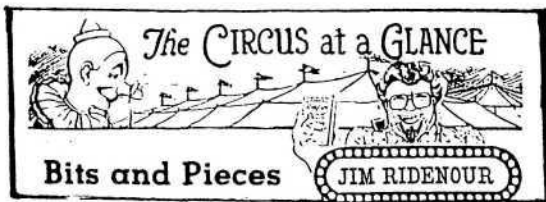
the inside back page of the 6/15 issue is Marilyn Rich, who did traps, rings and plange. "She was in Hawaii with E.K. Fernandez Circus in 1948! The girl in the photo on the inside cover of the 6/30 issue with Felix Adler is Estelle Butler, daughter of Roland Butler, who was an all around equestrienne on the show for several years. Tim and Gigi Tegge recently spent 10 wonderful days with me." They were checking out Kent's collection of 8000 8x10s! They also visited with Khris Allen & Colleen Perkins. "Their hands-on tiger display is one of the most moving, beautiful cat displays ever presented. What a treat to have a ring-side seat for that!" (Kent sent along 2 8x10s of lady performers that I have copied & will put in Back Yard. He listed their names, but to be sure, I sent copies to Mary Jane Miller and Jeannie Sleeter to see if they could name them. They both came up with the same names! Since Jeannie was one of those pictured, I hope so! I hope Kent will send along more group photos of yesteryear so we can all enjoy the memories!)

Dick McGivney was glad Smokey Jones' operation was postponed as Smokey and his friend, Charlyn, were able to attend the Circus Model Builders Convention in Georgia. There were about 90 folks attending. Smokey looked good and had a real good time. Dick remembers Smokey telling a circus story about being asked by a man, "Who's in charge here?" He replied, "That farthest guy at the end of the lot." So the man goes there & asks, "Who's in charge?" The man replies, "That guy you were just talking to!" The man returned and Smokey said, "We're all in charge!" (If anyone has more stories from the Convention, please write your editor.)

Don Marcks writes he is home & getting alone fine with a wheelchair and a walker. "So far this year, I've missed every show that has come this way-hope to see the Ringling show in August." He will soon have "Circus Report" up & running on schedule. Welcome home, Don!

Al House has sent along 3 great newspaper articles that I will have in the next issue. One is from the Staunton, VA paper about Eva Clark's death on the Cole show in 1906. This brings back memories of when a group of us from the Beatty show went in costume to her grave and held a small memorial ceremony and laid a wreath on her grave. The other article is from Hackensack, NJ, "The Sideshow Gets Into the Mainstream." It is about Ward Hall's show at the Meadowlands Fair. The 3rd article, "A Rambling Trapeze Troupe Aims to Evoke Every Emotion but Fear." This is about French trapeze artists, "Les Arts Sauts."

Cort Langdon reports Cirque du Soleil will be at Santa Monica Pier (CA) beginning 9/23 and Irvine Spectrum Center beginning 12/2. Tickets are \$38.50 and \$55. "Kaleidoscope" ads are running in the Minneapolis Star Tribune. It will be next to the Mall of America. Only the starting date of 8/11 is shown in the ad. The ads do not list prices either. Thanks, Cort.



Hi there...Well, I'm back...No one's had to bomb my place, so here goes my second column. The photo on Page 15 is of me and my son Mike. It was taken at one of the Sarasota Circus Festivals. Mike is no longer on the road. He married a wonderful gal from Mass. & is the father of two boys. Mike finally grew up...I never did..He still clowns. Does lots of birthday parties. Stole my whole act. I taught him well. Got a great "sucker" job that pays the bills. I am so proud of him. The Showfolks of Sarasota Tent 122 continues to be my biggest social activity. It is the love of my life. Along with my son, his family, my daughter Michele, and my dog Rube. Read the next issue of White Tops for an update of last year's tent activities & the schedule for this year's coming activities & guest speakers. Last year I gave away 10 videos (I get em wholesale) to anyone who joined the tent. We got about 40 new members. Some old friends & some nice folks I don't even know. I certainly appreciate the support. This year I am giving away 10 more videos. All tent members, both old & new, will be eligible if their dues are paid up on the date of the drawing which will be at the 1 Dec. tent meeting at Showfolks. John Herriott will be the guest speaker. Also a great pot luck dinner that night. If you are not a member of Tent 122, send a check for 6 bucks to Jim Dunwoody, 1315 Doris Dr, Sarasota, FL 34243. This year I promise to put out a "First Class" newsletter with lots of goodies that you may not have seen. So you will get something for your money.. I have never regretted my move to Sarasota in 1984. Sarasota is truly the circus capitol of the world. Everyday is circus day in Sarasota..Plans for the national CFA Convention next April are shaping up. Our chairman Henry Bush is on the phone with our national president Charlotte McWilliams almost daily and is all over town scoping out the details. It promises to be a great convention..The weather is great here in April so make plans now to "Come On Down." I talked to Earl Schmid and the Piccolo boys and they will try to make it.

As you will read in White Tops, the "Petty Politics" of a small but vocal group of CFA members disgust me. My love for the traditional circus is strong & I will do anything to keep it alive & well. It never ceases to amaze me how some CFA members jump ship & run to the enemy's camp. I have never been to Circus du Soleil..I plan on going to my grave that way. This show & a few others like it, claim to have reinvented the circus. Poppycock. These "phony" circuses are the enemy of the traditional circus..Not only should circus fans avoid them like the plague but they should tell any & all to do likewise. If I were king, it would be illegal to call these "Theatrical Productions" a circus. If I were king, we would have a "Truth in Labeling" law that required them to advertise, "A Third of a

Circus du Soleil." Remember there are literally hundreds of circus performers who have never gotten one weeks work from these frauds. Not one real circus person has made one red nickel from these phonies.

I would rather have a sister in a cathouse as a brother on one of these phonies. If you want to support a real circus, take a family to RBBB, CBCB, Vargas, Kelly-Miller, Reid-Sterling, Roberts Bros., the many Shrine Circuses, & any real circus in a tent or in a building. These "real" circuses need & deserve your support.

You are not gonna believe this...a couple of fans suggested that the CFA put on the 2000 Convention schedule a trip of Orlando on Sunday 16 April to visit Cirque du Soleil..Count me out..No way..Jose..I don't need no De Soleil..

Of course they are financially successful. But so are rock concerts, Kim Bassinger & Alex Baldwin movies & other assorted junk. They will never get a dime of my money. As Dennis Miller says on his HBO show, "That's just my opinion." The world is full of followers & not many leaders. Think for yourself. You decide what's good for you..The fact remains, some circus fans are so busy attempting to be politically correct, they can't see the forest for the trees. Support things worthy of your support.



## FAMOUS CIRCUS QUOTES

"I love a circus..You ask me why I,-I what was a clown on Broadway, should love a circus. It's the oldest form of entertainment that suits Grandma & Grandpa, Ma & Pa, and the kids. That's why I love the circus."

Jimmy Durante



One of my favorite circus films is "Ring of Fear." I have a big six sheet poster of the movie in my bedroom (what a bedroom) that covers the whole wall..Back in the 80s there was a black & white video of this movie floating around. I got lucky I found a color copy. The story is hokey but the circus scenes & famous circus stars are simply fantastic..I also have a theatre owners' press book of this film. It has lots of ads & stories. Clyde Beatty plays himself. Mickey Spillane plays himself. The movie was filmed in Phoenix, Arizona with the Clyde Beatty Railroad Circus equipment. My friend Bobby Hakes was there. My buddy Kenny Dodd has an original shooting script for the movie. Featured in the movie are the Wallendas, the Flying Zacchins, the late Johnny Cline with Liberty horses, the late Tiny Gallagher on the trapeze, the George Hanneford Bareback Riding Family, the Phil Escalante Troupe, the Victorias high perch act, the Latino & Martells Duo, and many more. There are excellent scenes of Clyde Beatty himself with his big cats.



The scenes of the train unloading are even better. Ring of Fear is one of my favorite circus theme movies. I watch it 3 or 4 times a year. Copies are available from me for only \$20 postpaid. Had to work a plug in there. It's in my blood.

A word about the TV & Video portion of my column. I write these way in advance. Should I get my cable guide in time, I will scan it and call Cherie & give her the shows scheduled for the 2 week period. If not, I will write about circus films I enjoy. I have some good ones I bet some of you never heard of.

Here's a good eating tip. A company in North Carolina puts out the best canned pinto beans on the planet. They are called "Luck's Pinto Beans." I used to drive across town & buy them at Foodline for 69 cents. Yesterday I discovered that General Dollar Store has them for 50 cents a can. They are delicious with my home made cornbread & a slice of onion. Sometimes I have buttermilk with the Southern dish.

Got to go. If you have comments or info, write me at Jim Ridenour, 3918 Freedom Ave., Sarasota, FL 34231 or call me at 941-927-1546.

### \*A Visit To Ringling Red\* By Denny Childers

**From Phoenix:** The animal protesters were out when we arrived at the arena for the show, however, all but one were teenagers that seemed to be more interested in talking and joking around with each other rather than protesting. There was one older woman who was standing away from the group of kids. I took a few pictures of them, to finish off a roll of film before the performance, to post on the web-to show their enthusiasm for the cause!

We bought the last 5 available front row tickets when we arrived. Unfortunately, they were on the back side, but still good as we were seated between rings 2 & 3. The arena seats 18,000 & it appeared all the seats except those at the ends were completely filled, including all the balcony seats. This was a surprise as this was the 10th day out of 11 that the show played Phoenix.

This was the first time my granddaughter, Sandra, had been to a Ringling show & the first indoor circus that she has seen. She liked everything except the "Human Comet" and the "Globe of Death." She said she couldn't understand a person purposely setting themselves on fire, that was very frightening to her. The acts she talked about the most were the horses, elephants and the clowns. When intermission arrived, Sandra didn't want to leave the seats. We watched the intermission activities and the clowns. This struck me as unusual as this is usually when she wants to go buy souvenirs. Evidently, this must say something about the quality of the show. After the show, while walking back to the car, she said that she still liked Carson & Barnes better because it has a big top and it is bigger! My favorite act was the Chinese Flyers-wish the act had been longer.

The show carries quite a few animals, but many are only used in the walk around with the Living Carousel. Animals in acts

included dogs, doves & house cats, tigers, elephants, horses and ostriches. I might be living in the past, but I think it will be a long time before Ringling puts out another show with the caliber of those that featured Gunther Gebel Williams.

**\*Fred Logan writes** he has returned to Sarasota from Circus Atayde, being there April thru June. He enjoyed working for the Ataydes, Alberto, Lucas and Alfredo. Fred says there are a lot of circuses in Mexico-in Monterrey there were 6, including Atayde: Ayalas, Garcia, Gonzales, Ceppillin & Mayan. Atayde was the only circus to have elephants. They have 5 Asians. Circo Union in Mexico City has Friesian Stallions, like Carson & Barnes; 3 Asian elephants, 17 tiger act, camel, llamas & ponies, and Big & Little horse act. Circo Americano is owned by Vazquez and has one elephant. In Laredo, Mexico there were 2 circuses-Seguras and Onay. The Gardens are now visiting shows in Europe and also will tour Scotland. The Osorios did very good business while out for 10 weeks. Circus Pages had good business in Michigan. (Thanks, Fred.)

**\*Rick King writes** "the 40 horses on the Two Hemispheres bandwagon as usual was the highlight. Also, the newly restored Hanneford Bandwagon making its first appearance in the Parade, followed by an owners carriage carrying Tommy Hanneford.

**\*Jim Kieffer writes** the weather in Milwaukee was great the entire week. People showed up on the showgrounds in record numbers. Several of the 18 performances of the Hanneford Circus were sell outs. The visitors this year seemed friendlier even when we told them a show was sold out. This certainly helped make things easier! (Thanks, Jim.)

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### \*\*\*AN UNLIKELY CONNECTION\*\*\*

#### The Great Circus Train-Russian Space Station MIR

By Maury Mead

This year the amateur radio special event short wave station on board the Great Circus Train scored a "First" & probably a "Last" at the same time. During this trip, the special event station made over 170 contacts with other ham radio stations while on the train. Among the stations contacted was the Russian Space Stations MIR. This wasn't a haphazard event. It had to be arranged in advance because the space station in low earth orbit must "see" the radio station it is talking to. This connection occurred on the morning of July 3 as the space station flew over the U.S. from the southwest. Once contact was made with MIR, the French Cosmonaut Jean-Pierre Haignere told the train radio operator, Jim Romelfanger, that the clowns were his favorite part of the circus, "Because it makes laugh-we all need to laugh." He also confided that as a youngster he wanted to become a circus clown. This was likely to have been a "One Time Only Event" because plans are to abandon the MIR Station & allow it to burn up upon re-entry. It is amazing the commonality the circus provides. Who could have imagined a connection between a French Cosmonaut on an orbiting space station & The Great Circus Train....

*"Hillary Brooke,  
Beatty Co-Star Dies at 84"*

*By Roger Smith*

(With excerpts from the LA Times)

Hillary Brooke, the exceptionally beautiful blonde actress, who appeared in more than 50 films, honing to perfection the role of "the other woman," died May 25, in Bonsall, California. She was 84. Hillary was the widow of the MGM General Manager, Raymond Klune. Born Beatrice Peterson, in New York, she excelled in high school athletics before becoming a Powers model. In 1936, RKO interrupted her planned trip to Australia by discovering her and casting her in New Faces of 1937.

Possessing more than rare beauty, Hillary won critical acclaim playing Blanche, in 1944's Jane Eyre, co-starring with Orson Welles and Joan Fontaine. That year, she menaced Ray Milland & Majorie Reynolds in the thriller, Ministry of Fear and enticed Bob Hope and Bing Crosby as a Klondike dance hall queen in 1945's Road to Utopia. Her personal favorite role was a fiancée to Robert Young, in The Enchanted Cottage, another 1945 entry. She acted in the series of Big Town films, and co-starred with Basil Rathbone & Nigel Bruce in Sherlock Holmes Faces Death and was featured in Howard Hughes' Vendetta.

Miss Brooke starred in war-based films, such as Never Wave at a WAC and toured Europe during World War II, entertaining Allied troops who never forgot her blonde glamour.

In 1949, Miss Brooke co-starred with Clyde Beatty and Frank Buck in Abbott & Costello's jungle parody, Africa Screams. Of the experience, she wrote to me, "Working with Clyde Beatty was a joy, especially with Bud and Lou. We did have a lot of fun. Sometimes I wished we could have a documentary of the fun we had on the set. Everyone had such respect for Clyde Beatty because of the manner in which he handled the animals." This letter is dated May 28th, 1992.

Hillary later starred as Lou Costello's girlfriend in the early 1950s Abbott and Costello TV series. Turning to more serious roles, she co-starred with James Stewart and Doris Day in The Man Who Knew Too Much, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, in 1956, before seeking retirement from Hollywood.

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**\*\*\*NEWS FROM OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS\*\*\***

Sheelagh Jones writes that the weather for the Parade was beautiful-lots of sunshine and very little mud. The Hanneford Circus ran 70 minutes giving performances 4 times a day, with 5 shows on Saturday. Most shows were full, with sell outs on Saturday. For \$5, it was the best bargain in town.

In the pre-show tent, we were greeted by tables with cloths on & comfortable chairs, with a fancy chandelier above. From the entrance of the tent, the patron's feet never touched the ground as the walk-through was a red, rubber matting-the tent floor was carpeted. A nice touch.

The show opener was La Polona with a hair hanging spin that lead into Dana with her energetic and much appreciated hula hoops performed to Ricky Martin's hit record-really got the crowd going!

Jim Zajicek put 4 Cuneo elephants through their paces, including a front handstand on a barrel. Raul with his little white dog would give us a dog stealing food act or a dog in an elephant outfit act-both were very funny. The dog was a hit with all the children.

From Mongolia, we had the Trio Naganzetti; 3 petite girls in outfits that added to their mellifluous contortion act. A very good act. Clown Cezar gave us up to 25 minutes, sometimes of out of control, audience participation. It amazes me what the public can be persuaded to do once they step into the ring!

George & Louise Maranov from Bulgaria gave us their classy cradle act-they have an adorable 11-week old baby. Ringmaster David Michael Maas and wife, Dana, presented a magical act of costume changes. Very well executed-we were lead through all the changes and the culminating crescendo often lead to a standing ovation.

On Saturday, La Polona did a full hair hang act and Vitell (not sure of spelling) gave us his archery act. Tommy and Struppi were busy entertaining the many circus performers who visited the show.

Ada Smieja and Bruno Blaszk were in for the week as their cats were in the parade. Evi Karoly had the pony sweep; Dave Hale had the petting zoo-a young camel was a big hit. The Buffalo Bill camp gets bigger every year with authentic outfits & artifacts, lots of roping tricks and a singing group.

The Red Nose Review, produced by Mark Renfro had Dick Monday, Slappy the Clown and Grandma giving us some wild entertainment aimed at adults as well as children. It played to packed houses.

John Campolongo brought 2 Cuneo white tigers for the parade as did Perry's Petting Zoo. With a midway crowded from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., I would say it was a very successful parade from every angle. Jorge Barreda had the elephant rides.

It was like "old home week" with circus fans from everywhere-Louisiana, California, Maine, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Illinois-you get the idea! The two Pfenings were there, and the Rikers and Richard Reynolds too. (Thanks, Sheelagh for a great report. Keep us posted on other events in your area.)

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**BIG APPLE CIRCUS TO PLAY FLA. IN NOV.**



**JIM & MIKE RIDENOUR**



**HILLARY BROOKE**

### **RINGLING BROS. STATEMENT REGARDING DEATH OF YOUNG ASIAN ELEPHANT 7/26/99**

Vienna, VA -- Today, we learned that Benjamin, a young Asian elephant with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, died suddenly while playing and bathing in a pond on private property outside of Houston, Texas. He and his companion, Shirley, another young Asian elephant, were staying overnight on the property as a stopover en route from Houston to Dallas.

We are stunned and saddened by today's news. Benjamin was born at Ringling Bros. Center for Elephant Conservation on February 3, 1995, and has performed with Shirley, his companion since birth, on Ringling Bros. Blue Unit since January 1998. Benjamin's passing is especially poignant since he represented a new generation of a dwindling species we are committed to preserving.

A local veterinarian was called to the property immediately. After the examination, Benjamin's body was taken to the veterinary school at Texas A&M University where a necropsy will be performed. A preliminary report is expected this week and final results of the tests will be available within a few weeks. An internal review began immediately in order to collect all the facts surrounding this unfortunate incident.



*Martha & Johnny Joyce*



1946

**Clyde Beatty Circus**

**Back Yard  
1522 Clinton Blvd.  
Bloomington, IL 61701**