

# BACK YARD

Volume V, Issue #96

July 31, 2000

## FAY ALEXANDER

1924-2000

Fay passed away July 16, peacefully, with his wife Rosie by his side. He has now joined all his flying act buddies in Heaven and there are quite a few up there now! What a time they must be having. Alfredo, Tuffy, Wayne Larey, the Valentine brothers are all talking about Fay's triple!

I was lucky enough to have visited with Fay and Rosie when I went to the CFA Convention in Sarasota. He was so proud of the memorabilia on the walls and of his scrapbook. Rosie was nice enough to copy a letter Fay had gotten from Burt Lancaster in 1956. "You must, of course, have seen the picture by now and I hope you liked it as much as we do. Generally speaking it has received tremendous acclaim everywhere it has played and everyone seems to feel that for the first time a picture seems to have been made about the circus that gives the feeling of the circus. I know in your own way you will be hypercritical about the flying stuff, but I can only tell you that audiences gasp and are thrilled by its great beauty and I am sure even you will admire it. We often talk of the work you did in the picture and we all know we wouldn't have been able to make it so successful without your contribution to it. I enclose a newspaper clipping from a Chicago paper of an interview I did there. It is filled with praise for your work and justly so." Fay also wanted me to have a clipping about David Nelson learning to fly. Fay is pictured standing on Bob Yerkes shoulders, who is standing on David Nelson's shoulders! I received two e-mails about Fay's passing. One was from Bobby Hakes.

(Continued on Page 9)



1936

Wanda Wentz 1936



Cristiani 1957





Fox 82 July 11 & 22, 2000

### THE FOX !!!

Dear Friends;

Well my cousin Gunthers wife left us to go to the other world to be with her beloved husband Gunther Wallenda. Ever since he died she really did not care to go on alone. First she sold her house which she lived in with Gunther and got a villa, but she never was happy there, as she was so very lonely. Then she had planed to go to her daughter who lives with her husband up north and she seemed to perk up a little, the outlook of being with her daughter Liza and her grandchildren gave her a new outlook on life but it was just not meant to be. She got a stroke and was partialy paralyzed, but it seemed to get better but then the second stroke hit her which left her paralyzed on one side and she had to go in to asisted living quarters. She got rid of her villa and really lost all will to live. Gunthers daughter Sandy did everything she possible could to help her to get her will to living back. She wanted to take her in her home but the doctors ruled that out. So for the 4th of July daughter Liza and her husband and the children came down to spend some time with her.

As I was told, she felt well the day they arived with the grandchildren, the one just was born and so it was great for Sheila to see her newest grand child but the second day she did not feel to well and the third day they had to put Sheila in the hospital, both her lungs had collapst. Sheila then aparently decided this was it. She refused to take any nurishment or any help, as now she was ready to go join her beloved husband Gunther. She had a very hard time, as God did not let her died right away. She gasped for air but refused any help. Well this morning at 2:00 AM, she took her last breath on this earth. Her sister Sandy just had arived and took her hand and Sheila left. It was like she had hold on to see her sisters one more time. Oh, Sheila rest in peace and I know that Gunther was waiting for you with open arms to greet you. Sleep well, my dear Sheila. Sheila met Gunther while the Wallendas

were working in Old Forge, NY. She had been a school teacher and Gunther and her fell in love and got engaged, shortly after that they got merried. After Gunther fell in the Wallenda eccident in Sarasota, while practicing to do the 7 men pyramid again, he quit show bussiness and studied to become a school teacher. They were one of the happiest couples I have ever seen and now they are both together again.

I just got through with the sadnes and then it hit again. Fay Alexander. Oh God, he was such a dear dear friend and loved by so many. I met him when I was working on the Ringling show. He was always curtius. He was a real gentleman who respected women at all times. Also he never would say no to anyone who needed help. He was known as one of the greatest performers, greatest flyer. His achivements in movies were The Greatest Show on Eart, were he doubbeld for Cornel Wild and Betty Hutton. The other movie was Trapez were he dobbeld for Tony Curtis. He also was teaching Circus of the Stars, also he helped out for a few years teaching at Sailor Circus. All around he was a great man who will be missed by so very many.

When Andy Anderson married Jenny Wallenda, he said to Andy, Boy now you are related to all the circus performers. Andy just laughed. But then one day his father from California came to visit him and as Andy and Jenny had a party, Fay brought him along. As they were sitting at their bar, Fays father said, Well you know, my great grandfather was Jameson you know of the Jameson Wiskey Company in Ireland. Andy looked at Jenny and started laughing. Well Fay, you and Jenny are very much related as the same person was Jennys great Grandfather. Fay, now you are even more related to all the circus people then I am. You are a far removed cousin of Jennys. Boy aint this world small. So now my dear dear beloved cousin, rest in peace and until we see each other again in this unnown place to all of us, rest in peace. Schlafe wohl. I hope God will be with his beloved wife Rosi and help her to go on until God will reunite them, Rosi and Fay. (Continued on Page 5)

## ELEPHANT SQUARE

By Mike Cecere

Here's another installment of our continuing chronicle of Capt. Ken Turtle Benson, the gentle giant, Asian Elephant, Big Boo, along with their mascot, Martin, the Wonder Dog and their travels across America.

Stationed right at the front of the midway on Robert's Bros., America's Small Town Favorite Circus, Capt. Ken's Elephant compound is the first thing people see when they arrive on the lot. And under the custom shade canopy for Big Boo, with Martin close by, it is like the Town Square of the tented Circus City.

An endless stream of visitors come by there on a daily basis, rain or shine. Curious school children with eyes wide with wonder get a close up look at the gentle giant and listen to Capt. Ken's fine honed educational lecture on Elephants and their conservation. A number of them return at night to take a ride on Boo and their parents and other adults take turns asking questions about the huge beast.

The Elephant canopy also becomes the meeting place for an endless parade of local dignitaries and the all important media. Capt. Ken and Boo are one of the most written about Elephant operations in the course of a season, with some reporters returning year after year to interview them. Now, that's a real positive image for the business.

And the real special thing about Capt. Ken's Elephant Square is the seemingly inexhaustable number of circus people and circus fans who stop under the welcoming shade of the canopy. A virtual who's who of special people, united by their love of Elephants and wish to be close to them, if only for a day. Not only circus related folks, but many present and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces make the trip also.

As many Back Yard readers are aware, Capt. Benson served his country valiantly as a member of an elite group of U.S. Naval special forces in South Viet Nam and many of the people he served with, as well as other Viet Nam Veterans, members of

that small brotherhood who gave their all to try and save innocent people from having to live under Communist Oppression. So next time you are anywhere near Roberts. Bros., stop and say hello at Capt. Ken's Elephant Square. God Bless America!  
.....

### MAYME WARD MARKER UPDATE

I would like all of you to know that donated to Mayme's marker at Park Hill Cemetery, here in Bloomington, the design and construction are under way! Since the cemetery and their fast-talking salesman couldn't match Judy Tomaini's price, nor her design, and in color, I might add, I have sent her photos of Mayme and a description of what I think would look nice on the marker and a down payment check. For those of you that get the National Enquirer, look at the June 6th issue and you will see a two-page article with photos of Judy's designs.

When I asked here if they knew how to add color to the marker, they didn't know what I was talking about! Judy lives in Gibsonton, Florida and is owner of the Giant's Camp, which was once owned by her parents, Al and Jeanie Tomaini, of Ringling Side Show fame. I enclosed a photo of Mayme on a single trapeze, a photo that her granddaughter liked, taken from a White Tops issue. I also thought it would be nice to have an elephant with a blanket on, since Mayme made so many for parades and Circus World Museum.

Judy designed Torchy Townsend's marker and I sort of went by that, with the photos and wording and I know Judy will do a great job. There will be nothing like it here in Bloomington and I am going to alert the media about this and get some publicity for the Circus Historical Convention, hoping to have it dedicated at that time in September.

No matter what amount you donated to the marker, you are making this happen. Folks gave what they could afford and that is what I think Mayme would appreciate, that people are remembering her after all these years. If others know about a circus person that does not have a marker, please let me know and let's see if we can't get them one! Thank you all again! YOU made this possible.

## *THE FOX !!!!!.....*

This is enough of all the sad writing, as the tears are running down my face and makes the writing all blurry. So I stop for a while and finish this letter later.

When I was at the funeral home, a lady came up to me and introduced herself as the cousin of Ernestine Clark. I was delighted, as I never knew that Ernestine had close relatives still living here. Ernestine has a big problem remembering any one and poor husband Parley Bear is unable to speak, which must be very frustrating to him, special to an actor. I see him often in all kinds of movies and shows on TV.

Just got a letter from Lauren and Tony Daw. Tony is right now directing a new TV script "Manhattan Arizona". Chad Everett will co star in it. They had to go to San Diego, the sit com will be filmed near the Mexican boarder. For two weeks they will be roming around in the desert. By the way I do not thing that I told you that Tony is also a volentier fireman in his town and his son is now a regular fireman. Tony & Lawren are very proud of him. Isnd it great with all the busy work he takes time out to help his fellow man.

Jeanette Williams is not in town at this time. I guess by the time you will get my letter she will be back from the Parade in Milwaukee. When I talked to her last she told me that daughter Caroline is doing great in Europe. She is with a brand new show, which Jeanette told me is beautiful. Also she told me that Caroline is getting a degree in being a certified teacher in horse training. When Caroline had a layover with the circus she went with some girlfriends to visit Italy. Timmy Loyal is doing fine to. They are not the loving coupple any more but they are still very good friends. Now back to Jeanette. I was told that the other day she was at the beach with a new boyfriend. She introduced him to every one there and then knocked him around and told everyone this is the best kind to have. He will not talk back to you and when you get mad you just knock him around or let his air out and put him in a

corner. I guess you guest it by now, it was a blow up dummy. When I called her the first thing I did was to ask what her new boyfriend is doing. At first there was silence and then it downed on her who I was talking about and then she said, Well, he is still here. He is sitting in a corner.

Belmonti Cristiani is in the hospital, but I do not know how he is doing. I hope he is now on his way to recovery.

Erna and Henry Strazan went with there motorhome for a visit to there daughter Olinka Wallenda Zoppe. They took Olinka for a few days with them, then they went traveling around around visiting other friends. They had been so bussy for the last years, Erna working at the Wardrob Department and Henry working at night for the county as watchman. So they really needed to get out of town for a while. Henry called me and told me they had a great time.

I received a letter from Mochtar former member of the Warsan Troupe, Arabian acrobats. He told me that he is getting ready to go to Marocca for a visit. As I understand they are doing this every year, him and his lovely wife Ann. I am sure when they come back they will let me know all about it.

Now to Gunther Gebel Williams. This was supposed to be a great secret. I finely called his daughter Tina and she told me, please Jenny, let everyone know that my father is doing well. As I understand, they flew Gunther down here to Sarasota were he had brain surgery. They took 90 percent of the tumor out, three days after operation he went home and is enjoying swimming and is his own self again, bossing everyone around, Tina said, which sounds just great. This hush hush deal makes him feel that he is forgotten, so get your pencils out and drop him a line. Tina will be glad to give him your letters as they come in. So please show him that we all miss him and are anxious to see him back out there in front of the audience, who also loves him very much.

Mister Zamperla is not doing to well. He is at home but had an other stroke which jogged his memory

(Continued on Page 7)

## Gunther Gebel Williams Update

John and Beverly Beard wrote about a newspaper article: Gunther had surgery July 3 to remove a brain tumor, which took three and a half hours.

His daughter, Tina, said he talked to family 2 hours after surgery and Gunther was released 4 days later.

Gunther was having problems with his vision and tried to ignore them but he was flown to Sarasota for tests. Tina said the family hopes that the public will allow Gunther his privacy during his recovery. He will undergo 7 weeks of radiation treatment.

Since Gunther has retired no one else has performed with a tiger on the back of an elephant and another tiger on the backs of 2 horses, Tina said. He has been with Ringling for 22 years. Our prayers are with Gunther & his family.

### FAY ALEXANDER

I forgot to mention that there will be a service in December in Sarasota for Fay. Memorial donations may be made to Hospice of Southwest Florida, 5955 Rand Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34238.

Fay was inducted into the Circus Ring of Fame on St. Armands Circle and he was a Coast Guard veteran of World War II. He is also survived by a sister, Dorothy Tubbs, of Big Bear Lake, Calif. and a niece and nephew. He was also awarded the American Guild of Variety Artist 2 years in a row. Thanks to Mike Martin for this information. God Bless, "Stuff." Fay and "Jesse" are with you.

### News From Our Circus Friends

\*Chuck Elwell sent a clipping from Glen Falls, NY: Circus Royale won't have elephants this year when they play there Sept. 28. "We know the animals are treated well. I can't stand to see animals mistreated," said John McConnell. "The public has to arrive at their values. We will still wait until the issue is resolved."

\*Bobby Gibbs reminds us that "The Circus at the Edge of the Earth-Travels with the Great Wallenda Circus" by Chas. Wilkins, is now out in paperback. As Bobby says, "Read it now, or miss it forever!"

## CIRCO MUNDIAL By Norman Borger

I went to the 10:30 AM show July 13, in Chicago, but it was cancelled. (I think I was the only one there.) In Thursday's Tribune, they finally had an ad offering a 2 for 1 ticket. I went back for the Saturday 2 PM show which had half a house.

The clown was the announcer, all in Spanish. There was a clown number between each act and they had about a 20 minute intermission. The program: Zangaro acrobatic act; Living Statues; Comedy musical act; Ramos, risley; Ayak Bros., trapeze; Loyal Bareback riding act, with Armando's wife doing comedy in place of Lucy; Bautistas, teeterboard; Flying Espanas; Rola Bola; Bautista's Wheel; Cuneo Elephants with Jim Zajicek and Mona Loyal. The photo in the newspaper featured one of the Zangaro brothers, from Kenya, sliding under a flaming limbo stick. The paper mentioned "some terrific Asian Elephants with an American trainer."

### News From the Ringling Museum

They now have a curriculum resource kit for Florida teachers, *Getting to Know the Great American Circus: The Ringling Years*, which will be distributed to schools in each of Florida's 67 counties. It focuses on the concepts that can be learned through studying the history and traditions of the American circus. It is a beautifully packaged lesson unit for elementary schools as well as other age groups.

### News From Our Circus Friends

Herb Ueckert writes "I applied to serve as a working volunteer for Circus World Museum during the week before the Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee. I was a ride ticket foreman for the week and a parade marshal on Sunday. Weather was good and it was an enjoyable experience being a part of this great event. I managed to catch the 70-minute Hanneford Circus several times. Tommy & Struppi brought in some great acts such as Nellie Hanneford's Liberty horses, Barry Lubin, as "Grandma," David & Dania's unbelievable quick-change costume act, Mongolian contortionists, skateboarding poodles and others. Also working during Parade Week were Minnesotans Tim and Linda Davidson and Ned Kronberg.

**THE FOX !!!.....**

and as son Attus tells me, he has his good days and bad. Some days he does not know anyone. My sincere well wishes go out to him and his family.

To the answer to Cherries letter about Dave Huber opening a circus, I was told he has three partners. The animals as I understand are at the place which is also owned by Jungle Land outside of Kissimmee, FL. I told you in the last letter that Ian Garden sold some of his trained animals to there. So I guess this has something to do with the circus. I wish them luck, they will be a tent show I understand.

Now an importen thing for my brother Mario. I really like to help him to achieve his big wish to do a sky walk on the highwire with a wheelchair. But this takes a lot of money, which he does not have. It is estimated around \$35,000 dollars to build the wheelchair and the wire and the crains and we do not even know what the insurance and permisses would cost. If you could out there find some big sponsorees, please me know. He really needs this to build up his spirit. I also will look in to getting a bank maybe to open a special account for this.

Dear Friends, right now I am just to sad about all our loved ones going over to the other place. God must be really planing to put on a giagantic show up there. I have to stop to write but I do like to get this letter in the next issue of Backyard and I hope Circus Report will pick up some of my messages. I am right now so very very sad and the tears will not stop.

Best Wishes,

Your Fox

(Please write Gunther at 7710 S. Lakeside Court, Venice, FL 34239)

**PASSING OF OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS**

**Sheila Monahan Wallenda**, 64, passed away July 11. She was born May 22, 1936 in Cooperstown, NY and moved to Sarasota 37 years ago from Old Forge, NY. Sheila taught at Sarasota High School and Brookside Middle School for 37 years. She was a member of Showfolks of Sarasota. She is survived by her daughters Sandra Rodocker of Sarasota and

Lisa Wallenda Picard of Arlington, Va; 4 sisters and 5 grandchildren.

Family friend Jackie LeClaire wrote, "Sheila's husband, Gunther, has been gone several years now. Sheila was just 64 and a high school teacher. She influenced Gunther to go to school and become a teacher himself. Gunther was on the wire when the 7 person pyramid collapsed in Detroit, killing two people. Later, the Wallenda's attempted to re-do the act. With CBS filming, they tried the 7 pyramid on a wire about 20' high in front of the cameras. Just as they were all out in the center, the wire broke loose from it's hold and they all came down. Gunther lost most of his teeth in this accident and his wife, Sheila, said, "Enough is enough." He left the act and went to school. He had to travel more than 50 miles each day, each way, back and forth, to the university in Tampa. He stuck it out until he got his degree. He became a well-liked teacher of Civics at Sarasota High School. They had a daughter, Lisa, who now works in the offices of Ringling Bros. in Vienna, Va.

In later life, Gunther's health failed miserably and it eventually took it's toll. Gunther was the son of Herman, Karl Wallenda's brother. Herman, in later years, was married to Edith, who just recently passed away. Their daughter, Rosemary, was here in Sarasota for the services. They are also survived by several grandchildren. (Thank you, Jackie. I have asked Lisa to write about her memories.)

.....  
**Judy Twomey**, 61, wife of **Dave "Happy the Clown" Twomey** and co-owner of the **Happytime Circus**, based in California, passed away in her sleep. There will be a memorial service this fall sometime under the big top. I am sure the family would appreciate hearing from you: The Twomey Family, POB 476, Fillmore, CA 93015.

.....  
**Violet Farmer** has been ill and I am sure would appreciate hearing from you: 5200 Orangeburg Rd., Eaton, OH 45320. Violet and **Bill** were at the CFA Convention and are members of the **Barnes/Larabee Tent and Sells Top #15**.

**RINGLING RED:** Dallas-7/26-8/6; Ft. Worth-8/9-13; Colorado Springs-8/16-20; Wichita-8/24-27; Moline, IL-8/31-9/3; Kansas City-9/6-10; Des Moines-9/13-17; Grand Rapids-9/21-24; Indianapolis-9/27-10/1; Detroit-10/5-9; Boston-10/13-21; Huntington, WV-10/26-29

**RINGLING BLUE:** L.A.-8/2-6; San Diego-8/9-13; Oakland, CA-8/16-20; San Jose-8/23-27; San Francisco-8/30-9/4; Sacramento-9/6-10; Seattle-9/14-17; Portland-9/21-24; Salt Lake City-9/27-10/1; Denver-10/4-9

**"Kaleidoscope":** Pittsburgh-7/28-8/13

**Hanneford Tent Circus:** Wyandot Lake, OH-next to Columbus Zoo-7/31-8/20.

**Circus Continental:** Lucasville, OH-8/9-12

**Porkchop Revue:** Ohio State Fair, Columbus-8/4-8

**Zerbini Circus:** Mansfield, OH Fair-8/6-13

**Carson & Barnes:** S. Hill, VA-8/1; Eden, NC-8/2; Salisbury-8/3; Lenoir-8/4; Forest City-8/5; Morganton-8/6; Asheville/Waynesville-8/7-8; Newark, OH-8/17; Yellow Springs, OH-8/18-19; Englewood-8/20

**Sterling-Reid Circus:** Groton, CT-7/31-8/1; South Woodstock-8/3; Lincoln, RI-8/4-6; N. Dartmouth, MA-8/7-9; Fitchburg-8/9-10; Lowell-8/11-13

**Vidbel Circus:** Orleans, MA-8/1-3; Little Compton, RI-8/5-6; Mattapoisett-8/7-8; Sudbury-8/9; Marblehead-8/11; Manchester-8/12; Beverly-8/14; N. Andover-8/15-16; Lynn-8/22; Reading, MA-8/31.

**Circus Historical Society Convention-Bloomington/Normal, Illinois-9/6-9**

**Roberts Bros Circus:** Merrimack, MA-8/11; Haverhill-8/12; Plainville-8/13; Middleboro-8/15; Norton-8/17; Spencer-8/18; Oxford-8/19

**Wenatchee Youth Circus:** Vancouver-8/4-13; Shoreline-8/20; Federal Way-8/26-27; Metaline Falls-9/2-3; Chelan County Fair-9/6-7

**Clyde Beatty Circus:** Oceanside, NY-7/31-8/1; Greenport-8/2-3; Middle Island-8/4-6

### BACK YARD

is published twice monthly-(15th & 30th) by Cherie Valentine, 1522 Clinton Blvd., Bloomington, IL 61701. Phone: 309-828-0737. FAX: 309-438-5607; cdvalen@ilstu.edu. Subscription rates are \$30.00 per year,

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. Visit Back Yard's Web Site: <http://back-yard.tripod.com>.

### News From Our Circus Friends

**\*Charlie Simpson** braved 101° heat to watch the **Ringling Red** train pull into Houston July 14. They brought all coaches and stocks to the Amtrak station by 9 AM, 56 cars in all. They unloaded between one and 2 PM and Charlie got to see **Mark Oliver**. Charlie spent 4 hours there! Ringling had billboards up and there were kids tickets in Kroger stores, TV ads and even color ads in the newspapers.

**\*Fred Logan** sent a photo of **Terrell & Dolly Jacobs**, taken, perhaps, in the late 30s. Terrell brought Fred to the U.S. in 1942 from Canada-Terrell was with the **Conklin Show Circus**. There was a fair in Toronto and he gave 11 shows. **Bill Woodcock Sr.** had the elephants, **Modoc, Empress and Judy**. Terrell had a big cage act then with "**Sheba**" the roll over, hind leg waltzing lioness. Fred has so many memories of circus history, I hope he will share more with us!

### New CFA Canadian Tent Raising In Immediate Future By Jerry Nicholls

Eleven prospective members of the new **Ian M. Garden Jr. Tent**, were guests of Ian Garden Jr. at **Garden Brothers Circus** in Windsor. Always the gracious host, Ian treated us to popcorn and drinks while we enjoyed his spectacular show. **Mike Hackenburger** from the **Bowmanville Zoo** took a picture of our group with **Angus**, the World's Largest Performing Elephant. Mike's five-year-old son, **Kurt**, has joined the act, swinging from a trapeze held by Angus. Kurt will soon be the star of that act! Members attending were from both Ontario and Michigan. Keep us informed, Jerry!

## FAY ALEXANDER.....

Bobby said he will miss his friend of over 54 years. Circus friendships seem to last a lot longer than those that work in town jobs!

Mike Martin also wrote about Fay's passing. He said he had seen Fay a few weeks before at a meeting at Alan Hills and was looking great.

I would now like to quote from Steve Gossard's book, "A Reckless Era of Aerial Performance, the Evolution of Trapeze." "The name of Fay Alexander came to be identified with the triple somersault in the 1950s because of the notoreity which he gained by doing stunts for the big film studios. Fay was born in Seattle in 1924, the son of a barber. At the age of 3, Fay came down with an illness which resembled tuberculosis. His parents sent him to dancing school as a kind of physical therapy. Fay went through the Coast Guard doing benefit performances with the Rudy Vallee show.

In 1947, Fay broke in with Ted DeWayne in a risley act, teeterboard and the flying return act. Fay met his wife, Rose LaMont, a trick rider, in 1948 when the DeWaynes were working with the Clyde Beatty Circus. He later broke Rose in with the flying act.

He began work for Art Concello on the Ringling show in 1949. Under Concello's management, Fay caught his first triple somersault in 1952. (Art had heard stories about flyers getting hurt doing this trick, so he told Fay to cut the triple from the act.)

The next time Fay practiced the triple was in 1956, when working doing stunts for Tony Curtis and Gina Lolarigida in the movie *Trapeze*. Fay also performed stunts for Cornel Wilde in *The Greatest Show On Earth*, for Martha Rae and Doris Day in *Jumbo*, for Gilbert Roland in *The Big Circus* and for Henry Fonda in the television movie, *The Emmett Kelly Story*. In 1973, Fay began working a comedy act called Al's Lemonsine." (You can order Steve's book by sending \$25 to Steve Gossard, 10 Siesta Court, Bloomington, IL 61704.) Steve and Fay were very good friends. I asked Steve to write about their friendship and this is what he has to say: "I recall standing in the living room of Dorothy

Durbin's house on Wright Street in Bloomington, about 10 years ago, looking out the window. She had invited me over to meet Fay Alexander. He and his wife, Rose, always spent the night at Dorothy's house on their way through Illinois to play an annual Shrine date in Iowa with Fay's funny car, "Al's Lemonzine."

"What's he doing now?" Dorothy asked me. "He's puttering around his camper. Are you sure this is him?" I asked. Could this skinny little guy really be the legendary Fay Alexander? The great flyer who had made the movie *Trapeze* into a cult classic for aerialists the world over, turning a flawless triple somersault for the camera?"

"It's a brown camper?" "Yes." "That's him. Go and open the front door and let them in." Fay and Rose ascended the stairs into Dorothy's living room. "He asked me if it was really you," Dorothy chuckled.

"I'm sorry it took so long," Fay said. "I was making sure there was enough ventilation for the dogs. We can't turn them out in the neighborhood, and I don't want to tether them. They're all right out there, but if they don't get enough air, they could suffocate." This was my first impression of Fay and it is one that will always stay with me.

My wife, Kathy, recalls stopping in at Fay's house and seeing the little dance shoes that he wore when he first began performing when he was just a few years old.

Fay was one of the few larger-than-life characters of our age who had earned the distinction of being called a "hero" by his personal character as well as by his physical accomplishments. A compassionate and considerate man, soft spoken and unassuming, with an attention to detail-that is how I will always remember Fay Alexander. I was lucky to have the honor of knowing him." (Thanks, Steve.)

Rosie said they worked for the Hartzells, then joined the King Show and then went to Paris to film "Trapeze." Willie Krause also worked on that film. She said when Fay was 3 years old, he learned ballet, dancing and she still has the toe shoes. His sister and him performed an adegio act.

(Continued on Page 10)

## FAY ALEXANDER.....

Rosie said that when Fay was young, he fell into the orchestra pit and the band threw him back on stage! Rose was trick riding on the Beatty show and in 1948 they were married. Fay said, "That's the girl I'm going to marry." Fay said he would quit flying when he reached 50. And he did, they then worked with the funny car and he also taught others to fly. Fay said Alfredo Codona was his idol.

In 1949, they went to Ringling. Fay had written Art Concello and Art said, "Come on. I can use you." They traveled from California to Florida and when they reached Florida, they had \$25 left! They stayed at La Tosca's Trailer Court on Lime Ave. The circus world has lost not only a great performer and teacher, but a wonderful friend to many. If you would like to write Rosie about your memories of Fay, I am sure she would appreciate hearing from you. I had the pleasure of talking to Rosie the other night, for over 2 hours-Sprint will love me! She and Fay spent 52 years together. So if you have memories of seeing her and Fay, please write and tell her so-3222 51st St., Sarasota, FL 33582.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Circus Model Builders Boise, Idaho Convention By Ron Purcell**

Boise, Idaho was the home to the Circus Model Builders 2000 National Gathering on June 22-25, 2000. The Gathering was held in conjunction with the Pacific Northwest Regional meeting of the National Model Railroad Association.

The weekend was also the occasion for Boise's 10th Anniversary Boise River Festival, which included 400 events run throughout the city. A event which has been rated in the "top 10 summer Festivals in the United States." So there was certainly much to do for Circus visitors from Canada, such as myself.

Boise, Idaho's Capital, is a city nestled on the river where the desert meets the Rocky Mountains. It is the world headquarters for Boise Cascade, Albertsons, Morrison-Knudsen, Micron Technology and J.R. Simplot.

The Circus gathering was held at the Center on the

Grove, where the main convention floor was divided about 50-50 Circus displays and railroad displays. Circus members could participate in the model railroad field trips-So, I got to visit the Union Pacific yards and the Intermountain intermodel yards amongst others. We all gathered for a banquet on Thursday evening and guest speaker Chuck Tinder, a college professor, shared his experiences of working with a Circus during one summer that he took off from teaching.

True to the expression, "the show must go on," a power failure blacked out part of the downtown area right in the middle of Chuck's presentation. So Chuck and host for the evening, CMB secretary and Gathering Chairman, Lonnie Sewell, had to complete the evenings activities under the powerful glow of one flash light!

During the Convention, a number of clinics were held, including weathering circus wagons by Susan Maahs, structure detail with Andrea Lindquist, plastic surgery 101 with Deb Morgan and Bob Maahs and Backstage with the Canfield Family Circus and tent making with Fred Canfield from California.

The circus and railroad displays were open to the public on Friday & Saturday as part of the Treasure Valley Train Show event of Riverfest.

Evenings were also active times with the live circus auction held on Friday night and as part of Riverfest, on Friday night, the Albertson's Nite-Lite Parade throughout downtown and on Saturday night the nightglow hot air balloon fest where 20 of the 80+ balloons that sailed every morning were set aglow with their burners in the evening darkness in a spectacular display held in Ann Morrison Park.

As a visitor from Canada to the National Gathering, I certainly enjoyed myself, shared some warm western hospitality and had more than enough activities to keep me busy during a busy weekend in Boise. Perfect weather and plenty to do-what more could a circus model builder ask for when attending a CMB National Gathering. Happy Travels, Ron. (Thanks to Gary Thomson for sending this in!)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 ★ **AL THOMAS MEMORIAL AWARD** ★  
 ★ **FOR CIRCUS COLOR** ★  
 ★ **PHOTOGRAPHY** ★

★ For the first time ever, the Emmett Kelly Tent  
 ★ #41, of Hagerstown, Maryland, has opened  
 ★ it's annual photography contest to ALL  
 ★ members of the Circus Fans Association of  
 ★ America. Established in 1987 by member  
 ★ Frank Ball, in memory of fellow member and  
 ★ photographer, Al Thomas, participation has  
 ★ been limited to members and friends of Tent  
 ★ #41. The winning photographer receives a  
 ★ handsome, engraved plaque in addition to  
 ★ fame and glory. There is no limit on the  
 ★ number of entries per person.

★ For a chance to win THE AL THOMAS  
 ★ MEMORIAL AWARD FOR CIRCUS  
 ★ COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY, simply send a  
 ★ 5x7 color print of any circus subject you  
 ★ found interesting. It can be a person, an  
 ★ animal, a tent, a truck, a trailer, any physical  
 ★ property or an entire circus scene.

**Please send all entries to:**  
**Daniel S. J. Rohrer, Jr.**  
**Photography Chairman**  
**11015 Rosewood Dr.**  
**Hagerstown, MD 21740**

★ Judging will be by an impartial and  
 ★ nonparticipating panel. All entries must be  
 ★ received by Sept. 30th, 2000. The winner will  
 ★ be announced at the Emmett Kelly Tent  
 ★ Banquet on October 14th when all entries will  
 ★ be displayed and in a future issue of this  
 ★ magazine. All photographs become part of  
 ★ the Thomas Memorial Shelf of the Warne  
 ★ Library of the Kelly Tent and can not be  
 ★ returned.

★ Anyone wishing to attend the Banquet, and  
 ★ has not received an invitation, can obtain one  
 ★ from Daniel Rohrer at the address above. This  
 ★ year's Guest Speaker will be Father Jerry  
 ★ Hogan, the National Circus Chaplain.

*News From Our Circus Friends*

\***Dick McGivney** wanted you to know that the Circus Parade in Altoona provided an opportunity for kids to see their first up-close look at a real elephant, tiger, camel and to see the expressions on their faces was well worth going-unfortunately, he had to miss the CFA Sarasota Convention to do this. We missed you, Dick!

\***Ringling Brothers** reports that on June 30, in San Antonio, the 129th Edition high wire star, **Pedro Carillo**, set a new Guinness World Record for jumping rope on a high wire: 780 jumps! Pedro's incredible feat eclipses the previous record by 50%. **Walter Guerrero** successfully completed 521 jumps in 1995! Visit the Ringling Web Site at <http://www.ringling.com>

\***Herb Ueckert** writes "before the CFA Convention, we had the Shrine Circus in St. Paul, a George Hamid date, produced by Ian Garden, Jr. I worked ticket sales for Eric McConnell. "Oops-the Big Apple Stage Show" was in Minneapolis in April. Neil Cockerline and I attended the opening and kick-off banquet of Circus World Museum in May. The show there is excellent and we enjoy it no matter how often we see it. Our friends, Jorge and Lou Ann Barreda, have their Jacob-Barreda African elephants there again and daughter Julia and son Lou are becoming quite the performers. Also on the program this year are the Rosaire's with their perky Pekinese, hilarious clowns, Greg and Karen DeSanto, Sascha Gasser, with a slack wire routine and his rola bola, Julie and Emily Parkinson on webs, and the powerful aerial acrobatics of Gheorghe and Luisa Marinof. During David SaLoutos' absence we especially noted the excellent job that substitute ringmaster Bradley does. We saw UniverSoul Circus in Minneapolis June 18, a packed house with little apparent advertising or promotion. It was gratifying to see Danise Payne from Ringling and L.A. Circus days, one of the Olate Brothers from Circus Vargas days with a new troupe of dogs and Ricardo Sosa, the astounding Cuban hand balancing contortionist who was on Carson & Barnes last year."

\*\*\*\*\*

## Carousel Modelers & Miniatures Assn

The 14th annual convention of the Carousel Modelers & Miniatures Assn. will be held September 21-23 in the Uniontown Mall, Uniontown, Pa. Over 25 tables of displays, including operating miniature carousels, carousel miniatures and other related carousel items will be on display. Carving demonstrations will be given at various times by CMMA members. Members from more than 5 states are expected to be in attendance with their displays. The convention will be held during the Lot 2 Circus Model Builders Gathering at the Uniontown Mall.

The CMMA was founded in 1986 by a small group of carousel modeling enthusiasts. Since that time the CMMA has grown to over 300 members from 45 states, Canada, England and Australia. The CMMA holds annual conventions throughout the U.S. *Horse Tales* is the official publication of the CMMA and is published quarterly.

The CMMA invites all carousel enthusiasts to visit this wonderful display of operating carousel models and miniatures. For more information about the convention or the CMMA, please contact CMMA Secretary, Patrick Wentzel, 2310 Highland Ave., Parkersburg, WV 26101. 304-428-3544 evenings; 304-863-7392 days or you can e-mail him at [pwentzel@citynet.net](mailto:pwentzel@citynet.net).

Information on displaying, vending or just visiting can be obtained from the following: Rege Amend, 794 Morgantown Rd., Uniontown, PA 15401; Bob Foster, 18 Lemon St., Uniontown, PA 15401; Bill Merchant, 716 Penn Ave., Brackenridge, PA 15014. Vendors: Jerry Schaub, 1722 Leolyn St., Pittsburgh, PA 15210. Visit the Circus Model Builders web site at: [www.circusmodelbuilders.org](http://www.circusmodelbuilders.org)  
Thanks to Bob Foster for the update.

## Sells Bros. Top & Barnes/Larabee Tent Outing

There will be a joint outing to Carson & Barnes Circus August 19 at Yellow Spring, Ohio, Route 68, 7 miles south of I-70. From 11:30-1 PM you can meet and treat the Circus staff to ice cream and cake in the cook house. At 1 PM, please bring a

watermelon to feed the elephants. (Don't forget one for little Jennie-Mozart). Everyone will enjoy the circus performance at 2 PM. After the show, join the circus fans for a buffet dinner (\$10) across the street at Youngs Dairy and Sells Top get together with door prizes and raffles. It is Pay as you go Circus tickets and buffet. To reserve space & information, call Doug Kruest, 614-889-9271. You are welcome to bring a picnic lunch to eat on the lot followed by the cake & ice cream with the performers and crew.

## *Passing of Our Circus Friends*

The year 2000 has not been the best year for Circus Fans Past President, Gene Mascioli. Gene's Mom (Leona) passed away on March 29th and now, in the early hours of July 9th, his Dad (Phil) passed away. He was 77 years of age. Phil was a WW II Veteran, so any memorials can be sent in care of the WW II Memorial Monument in Washington, D.C. Any correspondence can be sent to: PO Box 2520, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Please keep Gene and family in your prayers.

## *News From Our Circus Friends*

**\*Bud DeVere writes** "The old **Adam Forepaugh Tent #2** has reactivated with the fine-tuning of **David P. Orr** and **Sherry L. Hilton** of Duncansville, PA. A party is planned for the Tent reactivation in conjunction with the **Jaffa Shrine Circus** in Altoona April 21. Their dues have been set at \$6 for regular members and \$4 for junior members (12 years and under.) Send your check to Sherry, 1028 3rd Ave., Duncansville, PA 16635. I joined the Tent and received a beautiful card and a complete history of the Adam Forepaugh's Circus and Menagerie from 1830-1890 that was indeed a colorful era."

For those wanting to join the **Kenneth Feld Tent #150**, please send \$5 to **Estelle DeVere**, 5437 Broadmoor St., Alexandria, VA 22315. Bud puts together a real nice newsletter. Their Tent banner was made by **Terry Abbott**, a former circus performer herself!

### PASSING OF OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS

Pete Adams writes, July 14, "It is with sadness that I report that Bert Kramer, of Abcoude, Netherlands, died last weekend at home in a peaceful death. Some of you will remember Bert when he and his wife brought Circus Taratani from Holland to West Friendship, Maryland, for the 1980 Circus Model Builders International Gathering.

I can still remember the model builders here in Baltimore, bringing the 3 crates to the fairgrounds after they were taken off the ship and Bert spending full days and evenings assembling his model. It was a complete showground. He and Louise also came back and later attended the CFA National Convention, I believe, in Philadelphia, with Great American Circus. His show was a mobile show in which he gave acts each hour during the entire CMB Exhibition. It was the first time that I know of any model being brought from Europe to a CMB International Gathering. Model builders can tell you what size his display was, but his emphasis was always to put the model near the floor so that children of all ages could see his work, admire his showmanship and see the active displays.

It was indeed our pleasure to have visited him and Louise and see their circus room on two other occasions in Abcoude which is near Amsterdam in Holland, while in Europe.

If you would like to send a card to Louise Kramer, I know she would love to hear from her American circus friends. Bert was diabetic and had been ill even when he was here visiting the first time. He had had some heart problems and had a stroke in May. He died in his sleep at home.

Louis will continue to live at their home where they have been for 38 years. Bert was 70 years of age at the time of his death. I know that he belonged at one time to CMB International and also CFA. Please remember Louise in your prayers, even if you did not have the unique opportunity that we had of knowing this very fine couple. (Mrs. Louise Kramer (pronounced Louisa, but spelled this way) Schuttenberg 3, Abcoude, Netherlands 1391XH)

.....



Join us for a most extraordinary circus experience. A gala celebration of 25 years of Europe's premiere circus festival.

Escorted tour includes travel, transfers, 7 nights hotel with breakfast, and performance tickets.

From \$1950.00, double occupancy  
Tour Closes September 1

Tour departs New York  
Wednesday January 17, 2001  
Paris Circus Festival Available  
Massy Circus Festival Available  
Or Tour All Three Festivals  
please call for details

### Circus Express Tours

36 4th St #4

Bangor Maine USA 04401

**800-564-3395**

In association with

Alpine Travel Services

## A PAWS FROM MOZART

By Mozart Valentine

MEOW everyone, welcome back to my column. Mom has had a lot of news sent in this week from all of our friends and unfortunately, there just wasn't room for all of it, so we don't want you to think we forgot you! It all will be in the next issue. Keep those great circus reviews coming!

Let's start off this time with some great news from the **Chester Zoo** in England. **Jangoli** gave birth to a male calf at around 1:30 AM July 18 in the elephant quarters. The estimated birth weight was a healthy 100 kilos-no, I don't know how many pounds that is! The Elephant House is closed to give some privacy to mom & baby. "The other members of the herd will be out on the island, probably celebrating with a swim or shower! The Zoo is very grateful to the Animal Division team and our consultant vets for all their work during the 23 month pregnancy."

My friend, **Larson E. Whipsnade**, is keeping a watchful eye on little **Amali** from the Indianapolis Zoo. **Shaq O'Neal**, of the LA Lakers, visited Amali when they were in town for the championship series! On July 7, the Zoo held a contest for visitors to guess the combined weight of 4 female elephants. Together, they were just over 29,000 pounds! "After the contest, children & grown-ups could touch their tusks, ears and the bristly tufts on their wrinkled gray skin." **Ivory** has been artificially inseminated and is expected to give birth next month. **Deborah Olson** said, "We are very convinced that she will be a good mother, once the hormones kick in and she has a baby of her own." Two other pregnancies from artificial inseminations have been confirmed: an African in Austria and an Asian at the National Zoo in Washington. The birth watch, a 24-hour-a-day vigil, will begin soon and continue for several weeks using video cameras, volunteers and zoo keepers to look for rocking, unusual pacing or other signs that labor is about to begin for Ivory. I know Larson will keep me informed!

My good friend, **Denny Childers**, sent an article from the Evansville Courier about my elephant friends at the **Elephant Sanctuary**. There are 6 "girls" there now, and they are expecting a new arrival in a few months. **Bunny** is doing very well and likes to stay outdoors at night and she even chases the sanctuary's tractor. Until **Bunny** arrived, only **Tara** did that! "Bunny's incredibly vocal," says **Carol Buckley**. When the elephants return to the barn, it's usually **Bunny** who trumpets to let **Carol** and **Scott** know they're back. "She has learned we listen. It's so rewarding to see elephants enjoying their lives." On July 15, **Sissy** conquered another fear! She preferred to use the "back alley" to leave the barn, but would not return to the barn that same way. For some reason she was afraid to enter the barn that way. "Today for the first time since her arrival, **Sissy** worked up the courage to walk up the back alley to enter the barn. She was quite proud of herself. With her tire clutched to her chest, she entered the barn and then exhibited her sign of pleasure and excitement by flip flopping the tip of her trunk back & forth, rapidly creating a hollow pop, pop, pop sound. It is always a joy when **Sissy** conquers another fear." You go girls!

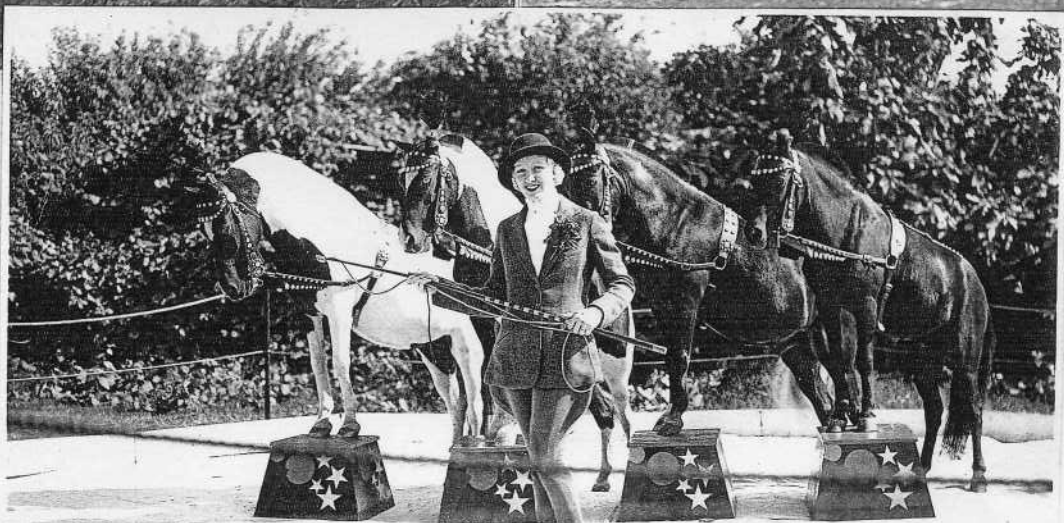
**News comes from Dallas** that an escaped chimp, **Judy**, 11, from the **Dallas Zoo** was electrocuted July 24 when she touched a power line. Monday was to be **Judy's** public debut after arriving last month from the **Tulsa Zoo**. She climbed over a 16' wall and escaped over an 8' tall fence surrounding the Zoo. **Judy** climbed a telephone pole and sat there for five minutes. Zoo people came to coax her down and Zoo vet **Tom Alvarado** fired a tranquilizer shot at her and she scampered along a power line before falling to the ground. Zoo employees who work closely with the 9 primates are taking **Judy's** death hard. Five Asiatic lions have died in the past 10 days at the **Gir wildlife sanctuary**, in India. 2 of the lion deaths have been attributed to rabies, while another one was reportedly electrocuted and the fourth was found dead in mysterious circumstances. Well, that's about it for this issue. Always happy to hear from you. **MEOW FOR NOW, MOZART**



1947



Bobbie Peck  
1938



Ruby Woods  
1936



Back Yard

1522 Clinton Blvd.

Bloomington, IL 61701