

BACK YARD

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**** "CAT DANCERS: JOY'S LEGACY" ****

By Barbara Brooks

Echoes of, "Sit!," "Stay!," and "Good Boy!" fill my memory of the magic-illusion act, CAT DANCERS, Joy Holiday in performance.

Joy died November 13, 1998 when she was killed in an unprovoked attack by her rare, white Bengal tiger, Jupiter. Cat Dancers' assistant, Chuck Lizza, was also killed in a freak accident by the same tiger 5 weeks & one day before on October 8. Chuck had been asleep when the cat became agitated. He woke up when Joy yelled at him to come help. Chuck ran from the house to assist Ron Holiday calm the cat, who had been startled by construction workers that were building additional kennels on the Cat Dancers' Florida compound. Chuck tripped on some construction supplies & fell in front of the big cat. Jupiter reacted and bit him in the neck. Killing is a learned behavior in tigers and at this moment, Jupiter's wild heritage was unleashed.

Ron and Joy Holiday's evening ritual with the cats was always the same. Ron escorted each individual cat on a leash from its day kennel to the trailer where the night cages were located. Joy waited inside at the back of the trailer to greet each cat as it walked up the ramp and then gave him a treat of a chicken neck. The cat then went into the night cage in anticipation of being given his dinner.

Cats are extremely sensitive to actions & emotions around them. In the wild their instinct is to take down the sick, the injured and the weak. Joy had been markedly depressed over the loss of Chuck and Jupiter picked up on this emotion. On that fateful night, Joy extended her hand holding the chicken neck treat & offered it to Jupiter. He sniffed at it and then lunged for her throat. For reasons known only to him, on this particular day he responded to his newly awakened call of the wild

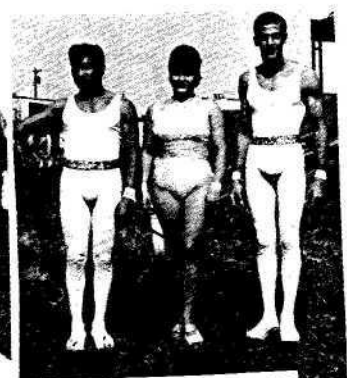


and took down what he perceived as either sick, injured or weak.

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Joy And Hercules



Beatty-Cole 1966



Patty Couls



Ed Phillips

Emmett Kelly

Died March 28, 1979
20 Years Ago



Mills Bros. 1963

****TIGER, TIGER By Mike Cecere****

As reported recently in the past couple of issues of Back Yard, a 430-some pound tiger had to be destroyed by law enforcement officials near Jackson, NJ when efforts to capture him failed.

These officers did what they had to do for public safety. It's their job. As a long time wild animal trainer, I agree with them. Public safety is paramount.

Big cats are all predators & no matter if they are raised by man, or their own kind, they stay that way. And as keepers of these wild creatures in modern society, we professional animal people are responsible for them.

It's the same out here in farm country. If a cow, horse or elephant gets out of your area, you are responsible for any and all damage or problems that might happen.

While events are still unfolding, it's becoming clear that the tiger escaped due to human carelessness & federal and state wildlife officials have had their efforts hampered by the lack of cooperation of some they are investigating.

While it's true that tigers are scarce in their nature lands, due to overpopulation by humans & destruction of habitat that's not the case here in the United States.

There is sad legacy of overbreeding for the exotic pet market, which has led to dozens of these great creatures being abused by negligent owners & cast off as is the habit in our throw-away society.

And there has sprung up around the country, a multitude of Animal Sanctuaries to care for these creatures. Some run by highly competent people. Some by do-gooder "wannabe's" & some wing it as a cover to sell cubs back into the shameful abuse of the pet trade.

While opinions vary & some people who know little or nothing about it, see nothing wrong with that end for the beasts. But, those of us who've spend our lives caring for animals don't see it that way. In fact, these people are for more damaging to our industry than all the Pro-Vegan Hate Groups combined.

You'd have to question why some continue to take the side of humans no matter what they've done & never the animals. Something to consider!

****HIGH AS AN ELEPHANT'S EYE****

In the production of the classic Oklahoma, there's a phrase, "Corn as high as an elephant's eye!" Well, in real life, Oklahoma, that's just what they have & the eyes are attached to the largest touring elephant herd in America. It's in Hugo, for decades, the home of the Miller-Byrd

family, owners of not only the largest touring herd, but the biggest tent circus and all around nice folks.

They take care of their people & real good care of their animals, which can be seen by any visitor to their fine show. For nearly their entire history, their elephants have been their pride and joy. And a notable roster of top elephant men have headed their elephant dept. Men like Col. William Woodcock, Cap Fred Logan, John Carrol, Ken Ikert, Don "Okie" Carr & now, Tim Frisco.

Tim Frisco, one of the country's top elephant trainers, is second generation elephant man. His father, Joe Frisco, Sr., is a living legend wild animal trainer, elephant trainer, zoo director & traveling menagerie owner.

He heads up the family's traveling zoo which includes the top 3 African elephant act presented by Tim's younger brother, Terry. Tim's older brother, Joe Jr., has just joined Gary and Kari Johnson's Have Trunk Will Travel, the "Gold Standard" for elephant talent & care. That's where Hollywood's top elephant stars reside as well as active breeding program. It takes a top man to be there. Tim himself, as well as his elephant experience, has a full resume of positions as executive & management with several circuses. You need management skills to move and care for the big Miller/Byrd herd. There's the added science part of testing viable candidates for their breeding program, headed up by master elephant trainer and authority, Bucky Steele.

The commitment of the Miller/Byrd family is impressive as they have invested untold amounts of money, dating back to the early 70s, when they imported much of their large herd of Asian elephants.

But, it's the unending dedication of capital that brought them their first successful birth, the start of something big there. But they are in it for the long haul as they've always been with their circus. Their success makes us all proud and the future of elephants assured. Thanks, Folks!

Father Ralph Pollone reports that he has a group of parishoners on a prayer line who pray for the intentions and needs of others. They are getting used to praying for circus showfolks. As a circus chaplain, Father Ralph is concerned about all circus showfolks and fans, not just those of his faith. You can e-mail him at CircusFanM@aol.com or FrRalph83@aol.com. If you know of someone that needs the help of Father Ralph and his helpers, please contact him through e-mail, or he can be contacted at Rev. Ralph Pollone, St. Mary, the Morning Star Parish, 665 Tyler St., Pittsfield, MA 01201. God Bless Father Ralph and his friends.

"JOY'S LEGACY".....

Cat Dancers had an unquestionable mutual love & trust with their animals. They shared and combined techniques in the belief of Pavlov's theories in conjunction with patience & affection to accomplish the training and conditioning of their animals instead of the "train-with-pain" methods that are unfortunately used by some animal acts still today. Cat Dancers substituted love, patience, understanding & respect for the animal. They never tried to take the wild out of their cats and always emphasized the unpredictability of the exotic cat.

I first became acquainted with Joy when she and partner, Ron Holiday, appeared on the Rudy Vallee "Broadway Tonight" summer replacement television show. Being a dance student with stars in my eyes, I was fascinated and mesmerized when I saw Joy standing on a platform with white feather-winged arms outstretched ready to leap into Ron's waiting arms below.

It wasn't until 1966 when I auditioned at Radio City Music Hall for the Rockettes that I finally met Ron and Joy Holiday. They were the ballet-adagio soloists for the Easter Show and were held over for the next show, "All About Love," which was to be my first show on the Great Stage. We met during rehearsals; they showed me the tape of that long ago television show & we became instant friends. And, unknown to me at the time, they had watched my audition and said to each other that they knew that "this girl would make it!" "Joy was with me on the first day of my professional life and I feel privileged to have been able to be with her during her last day of life."

Joy Holiday began life as Doris Gagnon, in Biddeford, Maine. When she graduated from St. Andres High School, she had life-changing choices to make. She called dance school partner, Ron Guay, who was appearing in a Broadway show in New York City and explained to him that she had to decide whether to become a nun (she had already paid a \$25. deposit on a habit!) or become a professional dancer.

She also consulted with her favorite nun, and grammar school teacher at Notre Dame de Lourdes in Saco, Maine, Sister Cecile-Anna, of the Sisters of Presentation of Mary about her dilemma. Sister's advice was to first try out her professional wings as a dancer, but to always dance for God. She reasoned with her that it would take 2 years to go through the Novitiate. If she decided after that period of time that life in a Convent wasn't one she wanted to pursue, she would have lost two valuable years of dance

preparation. And the door would always be open at the convent if she didn't want to be a dancer anymore. She shared this conversation with Ron, who said that the choices were complete opposites and, "that she had better pick the right one!" Two weeks later, Doris joined Ron in New York City and Joy Holiday was born.

As a young girl, Joy attended ballet classes at the Gladys H. Ruben School of Dance in Biddeford, Maine. She trained for adagio at M. Augusto's Paris studio. Joy and Ron's first professional appearance together was at China D'Or in Times Square, New York City. Together, with Ron, she appeared in a series of successful engagements around the world, including the Casino de Paris & Lido de Paris, France; the Festive International du Cirque de Montreal, Canada; a Royal Command Performance for Prince Ranier and Princess Grace of Monaco; and a recording-breaking engagement of 364 consecutive performances at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. In 1968, Joy added another dimension to her resume by becoming surrogate mother to a baby black leopard. The stage was set toward becoming an animal behaviorist and trainer. When baby "Aladdin" joined the adagio act, they took a new name — Cat Dancers. Several years later, Chuck Lizza joined the act. The newly formed team of Cat Dancers earned rave reviews for their work with animals and for their magic/illusion act wherever they performed.

And Joy always kept her promise to Sister Cecile-Anna. Before & after every show, she could be found her knees with arms-out stretched in the shape of a cross, giving Thanks to God.

"JOY'S GIFT"

It takes a great soul to be a friend. One must share much, endure much, forgive much. To be a friend is to love. To have a friend is to be loved.

Joy Holiday, of the magic-illusion act, CAT DANCERS, died November 13, 1998, leaving behind those of us who had the privilege of calling her friend. Heartfelt friendship is a dance in life! Once the gift is ours, neither life nor death, misunderstanding, distance nor doubt must ever come between. Sometimes, a special person happens into our lives & changes it forever; one of these special persons was Joy Holiday.

ACT I

Life is a drama...The overture is played, the house lights dim & the curtain parts. The story and props are in the wings, ready to be acted out.

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****MIDNIGHT IN THE MENAGERIE****

By Paul Horsman

During the 1950s and into the 1960s, several prominent carnival owners contributed to the exposure of circus menageries by adding large animal attractions to their midways for several years. In 1955, the World of Mirth Shows featured Tony Diano's Wild Animal Menagerie during the fair season, presented in a large bail ring top and featuring a large herd of elephants as well as a hippo, rhino, giraffe & other animals. Former Ringling cage wagons, purchased from Biller Bros., were used to house some of the animals.

In 1956, the King Bros. Circus folded while exhibiting on a lot owned by Coleman Bros. Shows, actually their winter quarters. Between the generosity of Dick Coleman & the sale of peanuts, the circus people and animals survived. To the benefit of all concerned, the problem was solved when James E. Strates, founder of the show bearing his name, purchased the King Bros. hippo, Polar bear, zebra, 3 elephants & other animals, along with the transportation for same. Included was the semi used as King Bros. privilege wagon, as well as the cage wagons.

A major benefit to Strates was that elephant trainer Bert Pettus & family accompanied the animals to the Strates Shows. A helper, called Chubby, also came from King Bros. The animal contingent provided living exhibits for a menagerie featured for several years, beginning in 1957. The emerging attraction sported a canvas banner line and a long tent, a setting used for ten in one, midget, monkey & other type midway shows. In early 1958, Strates purchased 3 more elephants, which came from Polack Bros. Eastern Unit. This gave the show 2 separate acts of performing elephants, and contributed to rumors that the carnival owner was planning to put out a railroad circus. Strates also purchased several wagons from the Clyde Beatty Circus, which converted from trucks to rails in 1957. Included in the purchase were the Beatty pole wagon, canvas wagon, 2 cookhouse wagons and the reserved seat ticket wagon. The pole wagon was converted to the front wagon for the motordrome, the cookhouse wagons became shop wagons, and the white ticket wagon was painted red & used only in Orlando, as an office.

In Feb. of 1958, I made a trip to Florida & proceeded to Winter Haven, where Strates was playing the Central Florida Citrus Festival. My Microbus was equipped with a cot, which I parked by the train, which was near the

fairgrounds. When I saw Bert, he told me I would have to leave the vehicle outside & bring my bedding through the gate & into the tent. He explained that due to the tight lot, only the animal people could have a trailer on the lot, and the only ones were the Pelaquins, who had drome lions. Bert also explained how well he was treated, that his men stacked bales of hay together, making a comfortable bed, and everyone else slept on the ground. The term "everyone" was an understatement, as many men not connected with the menagerie took advantage of the circus people's invitation to sleep under cover of canvas. Most of the overnight guests were employees of several other carnivals that had booked on a ride or two. The next fair, Orlando, was the big event, & due to opening early Monday morning, many of Strates rides & shows were being set up early.

Several of Bert's helpers were from the carnival, Chubby was still there, & an elephant man named Al G. came over from Ringling. There were mainline tracks right behind the menagerie tent, & passing trains had spooked the elephants all week, followed by a fireworks display that had the same effect. The fact that 2 herds of 3 elephants each had been merged was enough to cause extra caution on the part of the elephant men.

Due to the cold weather, a large barrel that had been converted into a Salamander stove was installed in the tent. These were comfortable for sleeping. Once the show closed for the night, life for the menagerie workers centered around the Salamander. The first thing that happened was that a collection was made, & one of the hands dispatched to a nearby grease joint where left over frankfurters could be purchased at a reduced price. Long skewers were produced from somewhere, & we all enjoyed a repast of hot hotdogs.

Next, preparations were made for sleeping, with hay bales being placed together so Bert could sleep in style. For the rest of us, hay bales were broken open & the hay spread for each of us, then blankets laid on the hay. We literally slept on the elephant's breakfast, after first giving them a few flakes to keep them occupied during the night. Another ritual was to place a large washtub full of water next to the Salamander stove, to provide warm shaving water in the morning. Finally, a resident Spider monkey was chained to a director's chair, next to the sidewall and well out of reach of the elephant's.

With all the carnies making use of the tent for sleeping, it took a while to settle down, but eventually, everyone went to sleep. (Continued on Page 7)

"JOY'S LEGACY".....

With the innocence of a new-born, Joy looked across the smoky stage and felt a newness, an awareness she never perceived existed. The wings, ready to be acted out. With the innocence of a new-born, Joy looked across the smoky stage and felt a newness, an awareness she never perceived existed. The pathway was inviting...beckoning.. luring her with crystal-clear urgency to enter...to accept the challenge...dare to succeed.

ACT II

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, "JOY" is...a condition or delight; happiness, gladness. The expression or manifestation of such feeling. A source or object of pleasure or satisfaction.

Joy loved receiving "pres ah nts" and squealed in little girl delight with the simple gesture of opening a small gift-wrapped package meant especially for her. She doubled over in laughter when she offered an unsuspecting friend a glass of water and the contents trickled down their chin from a cherished dribble glass prank.

Joy revered curiosity in all things and strived to learn new things wherever her travels took her. Her world experiences encouraged her to pursue her love of languages from her native tongue of French-Canadian to Spanish, Russian and a few words in Swahili. At any given time in a conversation, to the amusement of her friends, she would change the subject and start her favorite game of "What is the Capitol of.....?"

Joy had a lust for death-defying adagio leaps. In anticipation of soaring freely through the air, she poised high above stage level veiled in white feather wings. With arms outstretched ready for flight, she listened for the music cue and jumped trustingly into her partner's waiting arms below.

Appearing as "Special Guest Stars" with Ron Holiday at Radio City Music Hall and living and working the big cats were her greatest professional successes. The individual, unique relationships she had with family, and friends were her greatest personal successes.

ACT III

The finale curtain on Joy Holiday's drama of earthly life prematurely closed, but her legacy of artistic discipline, quick wit with a quip and love lives on in those she embraced.

ENTR'ACTE

To have a friend is to know one of life's treasured golden gifts.

A friend remembers us when we lose sight of ourselves.

A friend may applaud us and we are not embarrassed.

She gives loving attention to our work, our health, our desires, our plans.

She may reproach us and we are not angry.

It takes a great soul to be a friend.

One must forgive much, forget much, endure much.

For this most precious gift it costs time, affection, strength, patience and love; all delicately wrapped together in discriminate, perceptive attention.

Sometimes an entity must lay down his life for a friend.

There is no true friendship without self-sacrifice.

We will be slow to make friends, but once the gift is ours, neither life nor death, misunderstanding, distance nor doubt must ever come between.

Joy saw the dark, dark clouds,
She walked and laughed in the sun.
She shared her hurts and tears,
and felt the blessings of friendship won.

A heartfelt thank you, Joy, for sharing your life. It truly is the best gift.

Written in friendship and with love
Barbara Brooks

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***Phil Thorick reports** Sam's Club is selling a set of 4 videos, "The World of Horses." One is about circus horses-Circus Knie, training sessions, performances, etc. Other tapes are about Lippizans, Mongolian horsemen & horses of Iceland. The Knie tape is the best! Thanks, Phil.

Walker Bros. Circus is currently in Northern Illinois. Hope some of you will get to see them. **Sheelagh Jones'** daughter, Sara, is helping Walker Bros. with bill posting! **Lloyd Fengel** reports good crowds in Oak Lawn.

Folks have reported **Luis Munoz** had a wreck near Memphis and totaled his RV and cannon.

"Midnight In The Menagerie".....

All went well for a while, until there was a noisy commotion along the elephant line, & Bert jumped up and yelled, "The bulls have pulled their stakes & are loose. Heavy, get over there & starting driving stakes-everybody up!" Heavy was a carny, along with the other helpers, and enjoyed the amenity of a canvas cot. He just sat up in his cot, blinking his eyes, while Bert kept yelling at him to get up & move. By the time that happened, Bert, Al G. and Chubby had the situation well in hand, & peace was restored.

Before settling down again, the Spider monkey & her chair were moved next to the Salamander, near the heat & further from the reach of elephant trunks. As I finally started to doze off, I noticed a movement, which turned out to be the monkey jumping down from the chair. The monkey waltzed over to the washtub, lifted one side, and dumped our heated shaving water all over the ground. So ended the complications of a night in the menagerie!

The episode to follow will relate several events that took place in the daytime, concerning both the human & animal occupants of the menagerie tent. Included will be one of Chubby's escapades, as well as some events taking place in winter quarters. (Thanks, Paul!)

*****"CAMEL CARAVAN" REVIEW****

BY BOBBY GIBBS

Being a true circus fan, I am always interested in animals that are found on most circuses, so after having camel acts thru the years, I am on the lookout for information. I just got the 1st two copies of "Camel Caravan", published by Jimmy Hale and Karolyn Corbett, out of Montana.

This is a first class printed digest with photos, articles and ads, all about the camel world. Jimmy Hale is the son of Dave Hale 5-H Ranch, owners of one of the largest camel herds in the US. 5-H Ranch has provided the camel hitch plus ride camels for the Circus Parade in Milwaukee and I worked the six liberty camels on Big Apple Circus and at Circus World Museum in Baraboo.

If you have any interest in camels, this is a must for your collection. Karolyn is co-publisher and her family raises camels in Sydney, Montana and the two of them are real authorities on camels.

They also hosted the 1st Camel Conference, held at

the 5-H Ranch in Missouri. Famous vets and camel owners came together to share their knowledge of camels. While it is not pure circus, there are photos and stories about camels in the circus. I wish this young couple good luck with their new publication and the world of camels. (Bobby didn't include their address, so I will try to find out and post it in the next issue. Some of the stories in the Dec. issue were: "The Camels of VisionQuest," by Doug Baum; "The Camels are Coming," by Susan Perez; "Camel Trekking," by Charmian Wright, DVM; "Camel Facts," by Bill Rivers and "The Recovery and Transfer of Embryo in the Dromedary Camel," by Skidmore, Allen, Cooper, Chaudry and Billah. This looks like a very interesting digest and I will send away for more information, as soon as I can get their address. Let me hear from you, Bobby!

Lee Smith reports the Grand Rapids, MI newspaper had this article: "After a 15 year hiatus from clowning, the 75 year old Emmett Kelly, Jr. will once again charm audiences when he joins the Jordan World Circus as an added attraction. Because of Kelly's friendship with Joe Vanderhoff, Shrine public relations chairman, the famous clown was persuaded to don his hobo suit again.

Paul Tharp reports Bill Handle, from KFI in Los Angeles, was a guest of Kenneth Feld in Sarasota 2 weeks ago and he continues to rave every day about the show. So, his station is hosting an evening at Irvine Meadows April 8th. Paul is anxious to see photos and to hear the music tracks. I think we all are! With Linda Hudes, the music has to be great!

Charlie Simpson has been appointed CFA District 13 Director!! Congratulations to Charlie. I know he will do a great job for the Circus Fans Assn. of America. Keep us informed, Charlie! Charlie said Betty, a small African elephant, was on the news in Houston, playing a harmonica! He is looking forward to the coming circus season in the Houston area.

RINGLING RED UNIT:

New York City-Madison Sq. Garden: 3/26-4/11
Philadelphia-1st Union Spectrum: 4/15-4/25
Providence, RI-Civic Center: 4/28-5/2
New Haven, CT-Vets Mem. Coliseum: 5/5-5/9
Hartford, CT-Civic Center: 5/13-5/16
Albany, NY-Pepsi Arena: 5/18-5/19
Hershey, PA-Hersheypark Arena: 5/26-5/31

RINGLING RED UNIT:

Wash, DC-Armory: 3/30-4/13
Landover, MD-US Airways Arena: 4/16-4/18
Charleston, WV-Civic Center: 4/22-4/25
Chattanooga, TN-UTC Arena: 4/29-5/2
San Antonio, TX-Freeman Arena: 5/12-5/16
Peoria, IL-Civic Center: 5/20-5/23

CARSON & BARNES CIRCUS:

Georgetown, TX: 4/1
Ft. Hood, TX: 4/2-4/3
April 4-Easter-No Show
San Antonio, TX: April 5-11
San Marcos, TX: 4/12
Lampassas, TX: 4/13
Brady, TX: 4/14
Stephenville, TX: 4/15
Bowie, TX: 4/16
Lawton, OK: 4/17
Altus AFB, OK: 4/18
Vernon, TX: 4/19
Burkburnett, TX: 4/20
Gainesville, TX: 4/21
Denton, TX: 4/22-23
Sherman, TX: 4/24

Pittsburgh, PA-Hanneford Shrine: 4/9-11

UniverSoul Circus:Norfolk, VA: 4/9-18; NY-4/21-5/21

Famous Cole Indoor Circus: Urbana, OH-4/8; Connersville, IN-4/18; Versailles, IN-4/21

Royal American Circus: Dayton OH Fairgrounds-4/5-6

Hanneford Shrine: Columbus, OH Fairgrounds-4/9-18; Univ. of Dayton, OH Arena-4/23-25

Hamid Circus Royale: Wilkes-Barre, PA-4/5-10; Houston, TX-4/7-11; St. Paul, MN-4/8-11; Pasadena,

TX-4/15-18; Hays,KS-4/18; Manhattan, KS-4/21; Salina, KS-4/24; Terre Haute, IN-4/23-25; Buffalo, NY-4/29-5/2; Binghamton, NY-5/7-9; Plymouth Meeting, PA-5/14-16; VA Beach, VA-6/24-27

Vidbel Shrine Circus: Pikeville, KY: 4/1; Morehead-4/2; Ashland-4/3; Altoona, PA-4/19-25(Jaffa Temple)

***Paul Holley reports** Friends of the Circus will hold their anniversary meeting 4/16 at Harbor Center Hotel, 723 Center Ave, Sheboygan, from 2-6 pm, followed by dinner in the hotel restaurant. The club is open to anyone who loves the circus. Annual dues are \$8. For advance registration, call Dennis Schoening 920-452-1389 or Harold & Kathy Schoening, 920-457-5930.

Another item on e-bay web site was "Aerial Flying Return Trapeze." The opening bid was set at \$12,000!! The location?? Bloomington, IL!!! I checked out the seller and it was Mr. Sherer, Lowell Sherer's son. Lowell and his wife, Mary, were flyers from here. I don't know if anyone bid on this item!

Bobby Gibbs reports he will be working at the Shrine Circus in Nashville, TN, and then heading for Toledo before they go to Canada to join Cirque Leonardo. First date on the list is April 29, so I will print their route in the next issue. The route goes thru June 23. We all wish Bobby well.

Bobby also sent along the dates for **Barnum's Kaleidoscope** in Irvine, CA; April 7 thru April 18. Can't wait for those of you that get to see this new show and send in reports what acts are there. Prices range from \$22 to \$48.

Amos Bolieau reports the spring gathering of the Commodore Nutt Tent will be April 9 in Manchester, NH. Their special guest will be **Barry Lubin, "Grandma."** Wayne McCary's Shrine Circus will be day and dating for those wishing to attend the circus. Time to kick off the New Hampshire circus season!! Hope to get a report on Barry's talk & how the circus was. Thanks, Amos.

****Circus Eloize By Gary Thomson****

Cirque Eloize performed 'Excentricus' at the Hammerson Hall of the Living Arts Center In Mississauga, Ontario on March 17-18, 1999 giving one performance only at 7:30 pm each evening. We attended on Mar. 17 to a capacity audience of 1,200. 7 young artists, having recently graduated from the National Circus School of Montreal, decided in 1993 to combine their various talents and energies to create a new "Quebecois Circus", a European style, animal free circus, under the banner of CIRQUE ELOIZE. Originating from the Magdalen Islands [off the coast of Quebec], these performers drew inspiration from the local expression for heat lightning, "eloize" [pronounced el-waz], and Cirque Eloize was born in the fall of that year. Since the autumn of 1997, Cirque Eloize has been touring the world with it's sparkling new production, "Excentricus". Featuring seventeen artists, acrobats, clowns and musicians performing live on stage, all with their own special ways of taking to the stage, taking to the audience, flying high and making music. This year they are touring with a live band featuring electric pianos, guitars, bass, drums, saxophones, trumpets and flutes. All five members play several instruments and work on stage just behind the performers often mingling with them as the show progresses. The troupe members dress in peasant costumes and rely on very few props and lighting effects that are subtle and kept to a minimum. The show goes for 90 fast-paced minutes with no intermission or wasted space. Among the acts were: *Trapeze - Marie-Eve Dumais*Artistic Bicycle-Sylvain Dubois-this gentleman had tremendous rapport with the audience and did things with a bicycle that I have never seen before or deemed to be possible. *Verticle Rope by Marcus *Group Juggling - by a group of 5 young gentlemen using large pins. They were sometimes stacked 3 high while juggling. At one point two of the group were standing next to the guitarist imitating guitars with the juggling pins-lots of personality. *Aerial Cradle by Ariane Darche and Antoine Gagnon *Floor Acrobatics and Group Bicycle - the entire cast took part in this act with tremendous energy that kept the audience on the edge of their seats. There was considerable interaction between the performers and the audience. This represented the 'Finale'. The audience called the performers back several times before the applause died down. This was an excellent version of the alternative form of circus that is found in Quebec & growing elsewhere in North America.

***Rick King reports** RBBB ticket wagons #121-123 and Sells Floto #62 will be used temporarily by Barnum's Kaliedoscope in San Diego until their's arrive.

***Paul Butler, Ontario, reports** his wife, Winnie and himself & Jerry and Shirley Nicholls, of London, attended the meeting of the Joel E. Warner Tent, held at the Saginaw House, MI. The feature of the meeting was a talk by Mar. Lynn, widow of semi-pro clown, "Spats." They attended the Shrine Circus (Jordan World Circus). Highlights were 15 beautiful white tigers, 5 African elephants, presented by Lou Ann Jacobs, the daughter of the world famous Ringling clown, Lou Jacobs & the boys & girls on the flying trapeze. Paul is 82 years young & the last remaining charter & founding member of the Martin Downs Ring; charter member of Dorthy Herbert Tent (a great bunch); Joel E Warner & now a charter member of the Pat Kelly Ring #118 & also the Michigan CMB. He asks if anyone knows where the Smahas are today. Please let your editor know & I will write Paul.

***Alan Hollander reports** his family attended the morning performance of the RBBB 129th edition of the circus. This is one of the finest productions he has seen in many years.

Catherine Hanneford did a wonderful job as ringmaster. The show moved along at a comfortable pace. It was a pleasure to watch one professional (quality) act follow another. They all enjoyed the menagerie, 1 hour before the show. Everyone was friendly & helpful. A "circus" atmosphere prevailed. The Living Carousel number was indeed spectacular. They are already looking forward to next year's performance.

***Rev. David Tetrault reports** when the Red Unit of RB visited Richmond, VA, he told the clowns about Amelia Adler and they called her and sent flowers. This made her day! God Bless.

***Jackie LeClaire reports** he is going to be the Celebrity Clown for Felix Adler Festival in Clinton, IA, June 11-13. He will go directly from Clown Camp at the Univ. of Wisconsin at La Crosse. That is June 5-10. This will be his 5th year there teaching.

***Betty Heron, circus fan,** passed away last week. Her funeral was 5/20. Friends may contact Howard at 2211 Badian Dr, Silver Springs, MD 20904.

***Paul Holley reports** the mighty Carson & Barnes Circus returns to the midwest in 1999. Confirmed Wisc. dates are: 7/16-Marshfield; 7/17-Berlin; 7/18-Sheboygan; 7/19-Manitowac. Other shows expected are Liebel Circus in May, Alain Zerbini in June and Walker Bros. Circus.

Moscow Circus On Ice By Gary Thomson

Established in December, 1991, this is the first Russian privately owned circus under president and founder, Sergey Ryshkoff. They have since traveled throughout the world. The Moscow Circus on Ice was presented at the Hershey Center in Mississauga, Ontario from March 6 to 14, 1999, performing twice daily. We attended the evening show on Sat. Mar. 13. The Hershey Center holds 8,000 people but the Circus was set up in one half with good seating for about 3,000 people. They used one large ring on the ice with a curtained backdrop blocking the other half of the rink that was used for staging the acts.

The Circus band consisted of prerecorded music supported by two electric pianos and drums. The live music was used to co-ordinate with the troupe's actions on the ice and it worked very well. On a general note, the costuming was superb, with no expense spared, and the lighting effects were phenomenal, all making for a very professional show. One 'act' that was noticeably missing, was the hockey-playing bears. I suspect that after major incidents with animal rights groups in Western Canada with lots of media coverage, they decided to withdraw the bears [they were present in the program only].

THE SHOW:

*the first act was the 'Ice Born' and the 'Flight in the Ring' - group of skaters dressed as butterflies support a circus flyer [Yelena Kovalenko] in a metal ring suspended above the ice. -following this act there was a superb display of skating on stilts; a young lady on 24" stilts and a young man on 36" stilts. This was amazing to see what had to be called a ballet on ice on stilts.

*The clowns, Pavel Yegorov, Vadim Rayevskiy, Andrey Listratov and Oleg Danilov, came out and did a routine with 4-foot balls that they through into the audience.

*'Air Twins', Oksana and Alexandra Denisova performed high above the ice on double trapezes. Keep in mind that everyone was wearing ice skates. *the clowns were back with the old fashion 'bucket of water' skit. In this one they used real water which was used to soak the clowns and spray the crowd, then, after a careful switch, the clowns were able to scatter the crowd when they tossed an entire bucket towards the crowd. This is the best version of this skit that I have seen. *'Romance with Doves' by Olga and Alexander Bekish. Six 'doves' [appeared to me to be white fantail pigeons] were use to work with Olga and, on several occasions, were thrown into the audience. They did not fly until they started to fall and then returned to Olga. When the act was over

they flew back to their own cages.

*'Maestro' - clowns Oleg Danilov and Pavel Yegorov performed with violins of different sizes and in different positions-funny and talented.

*'Oriental Sensation' - superb oriental costumes and precision skating by the Corps De Ballet. *The clowns arrived again with a very funny strong man act. One clown was dressed as a well-endowed gypsy lady. I won't say any more. *'Monocycle Waltz Fantasia' - 11 skaters performed precision skating while 2 monocycles moved among them. One short and one tall monocycle with members of the troupe even doing handstands on them. Also, a clown appeared riding a monocycle made from a car tire. *Intermission - 20 minutes.

*'Effort, Perches on Skates' - skaters dressed as birds came in on stilts while others performed with an upright pole with a large steel ring on the top.

*'Fire Lady-Hoola Hoops' - Yelena Shpaghina performed with hoops. A good act with dozens of hoops, many fluorescent, and, in one case, on fire. Try this on ice skates; she made it look easy. *the clowns reappeared to take their shot at the 'Hoola Hoops' to the crowd's great delight. *'Magic Dream' with Sergey Ryshkoff and Olga Bikish - this was a very stylish magic act where the young lady appeared from a large pot after it was skewered by swords and fiery torches.

*'A Night on the Bare Mountain' included 'Witches' Dance', Angel of Darkness'. 'Bacchanalia', and 'Sunrise'. This was a long and elegant series of acts that included aerial rings, extensive tumbling using teeter-totters and precision figure skating. The costuming was incredible.

*'FINALE' - All the members of the troupe were introduced. They were called back 3 times by audience applause. It was a superb show that we would not hesitate to see again. (Thanks, Gary.)

*Rick King reports things at the CWM are progressing nicely as our winter restoration season continues. Work is continuing on the Hanneford Tableau. Al G. Barnes #99 got new sides & floor and repairs were made on the possum belly. Painting is being completed on the Royal Italian Bandwagon. RBBB #102 is all framed & the metal siding started going on today. The roofs of the Ring barn & elephant barn are being replaced with new raised seam metal roof, like the original. The Two Hemisphere Bandwagon will return to the museum this summer. John Robinson #1 (Lion & Gladiator), Cinderella, Gollmar #4, & the Bell Wagon was in route to Wash. DC for Ringling's opening 3/25.

News From Our Circus Friends

***Carson & Barnes reports** that Ralph & Susan Gifford and the brigade crews are brightening the landscape with new colorful posters! One features Jennie, the baby elephant. The other has "bear Jordan", a basketball-playing bear from Russia. Jennie & her mom, Isa, will travel in style this season. Her semi has been custom designed for her needs & comfort. People will have the opportunity to see her up close & enjoy her antics. Jennie is a real "ham!"

Ted Bowman has been ill this winter. Please drop him a note of cheer at 410 Hillside Ct, Hugo, OK 74743.

After an absence of 2 years, the Carson & Barnes tradition of publishing a routebook at the end of the season will be reinstated in 1999. (We all look forward to this! Cherie)

For your 1999 route cards, send \$29.95 to Carson & Barnes, POB 10, Hugo, OK 74743.

***Denny Childers reports** that Carson & Barnes have a new web site. Visit: www.carsonbarnescircus.com - They have a picture of their new baby, Jennie!

***Rick King reports** long time **Circus World Museum** employee, **Frank Braun**, suffered 2 heart attacks last week. Frank started at the museum in 1959. He worked for Deppe's Classic Country Circus as an asst. to John Herriott. When Deppe sold the show, Frank became an official museum employee. He had a quad-bypass 2 years ago. He is resting at home.

***Al House reports** **Frank Robie** called to say **Amelia Mullen Adler, Felix Adler's** widow, has not been well. Please send good wishes to: Amelia Mullen, 1314 Claremont Ave, Richmond, VA 23227.

***Chuck Elwell**, a 50+ years member of CFA and a subscriber of Back Yard, is under the weather. I'm sure he would appreciate "get well" cards. Please send to: 114 Leonard St, Bennington, VT 05201.

***Bobby Gibbs reports** **Don Anderson**, Texas White Horse Ranch, had a triple bypass surgery. Cards can be sent to: 18730 Farm Rd 15, Troup, TX 75789

***Dr. John Martin, Ashland, KY reports** **Mabel Hetzer**, 91, Huntington, WV, was found dead in her apartment by a neighbor 3/22. The police reported her home showed signs of a robbery & have, at this time, ruled her death a homicide. Mabel was the sister of the late James Hetzer, producer of many shows & producer-owner of the Hetzer International Circus. The Hetzer Theatrical Agency was the agent for many of the popular circus acts & produced many shows all over the country.

Mabel was the co-owner of the agency & functioned as its business mgr. She is survived by Ms. Kathy Hetzer, who owns Hetzer Theatrical Agency in Texas.

***Jill Martin reports** 2 very special neighbors of Ron Holiday have set up a fund for his animals. Donations can be sent to: Gay Walstrum, 6611 NW 218th St., Alachua, FL 32615, or Eunice LaGrippe, POB 781, Newberry, FL 32669. Jill can be reached at 214 5th Ave, Baraboo, WI 53913. Back Yard was given some wrong information & Ron still has all his animals at home. I am sorry for the incorrect facts. Ron has some exciting plans for the future and when he feels he is able to share these with you, I will let you know.

***Bob Karczewski, Traverse City, MI reports** there was an article in the paper about Royal Hanneford seeking approval for a high wire walk in downtown. They are scheduled to be there 4/13 & they would like to have Jay Cochrane walk the high wire above & across Front St. as a publicity stunt on 4/12 to let the public know that the circus is coming to town. The city atty. is concerned with liabilities. John Daly, speaking for the circus, said that they normally agree to a "hold harmless" clause for such matters. Bob will let us know what happens!

***Buddy Calhoun reports** USA Today had an article on Cirque du Soleil in the Money Section. It highlights the money-making appeal of the Cirque productions. Buddy hopes that Cirque's popularity would get families back into more traditional circuses!

Turtle Benson reports "I was visited last season by well-known author of children's books, Joan Elste, whose works are in schools nationwide with the idea of doing one on a circus elephant. She spent many days with me, gathering material for the book, which is being prepared as I write this. The book will be the usual story, aimed at children, but will have a plot that has some dark moments.

But, the circus comes out as the good guys in the end. I can't give away the story, but I can tell you that it will give the young readers an understanding of what is involved in the day to day life of us who care for elephants, & will strongly state our side of the animal rights issue. It should be out by June or July & will cost \$2-3. Even I can afford that! See you down the road, Turtle." (Let us know how the book is coming and where we can purchase it. Also, hope to hear how you and Boo are doing! Thanks.)

Beatty's Rolled & Tapered Poppers

"Lessons From The Old School"

By Roger Smith

Working for Beatty meant meeting the incessant demands of his high-voltage wild animal act, which inherently embraced his own long-ago apprenticeship & naturally included personal preferences of his polished skills. It was a lot to pick up, & it was made clear from my first day, I was expected to learn it all at once, never forget a single detail, & practice it like a seasoned pro, without error, right down to his poppers. I had carefully prepared my approach to this job, & when Mr. Beatty hired me, the relentless intensity required me to adjust immediately to all tasks at hand. But I was working for my life-long hero, and quickly found I couldn't get enough of it.

In the first 2 articles of this series, we've used a particular thread for tying. Barbour's No. 10 Pure Flax Shoe Thread comes 8 round, 2-ounce balls in a case. This is a tough thread favored by cobblers. Old School trainers held it indispensable in whip-making, & carried it on to the traditional, hand-rolled Barbour's flax popper. The thread is made in Great Britain, and over here, Beatty ordered his from the Linen Thread Co. of Blue Mountain, Alabama.

This company is history, but you can get yours through a finder's house. First try the local shoe hospital or boot-maker, & remember the old admonition: "If y'ain't used yer Barbour's flax, y'ain't made a popper."

Reflecting on our flat lash yarn, as a corollary, about getting laughed off the lot with your store-bought round lash, you'll draw just as many disdainful snickers flashing a machine-rolled nylon popper.

To get the picture of what you're going for, look at the photo of Beatty facing page 370 of his first book, The Big Cage. There at his feet is a fresh popper. In the photo facing page 400, note how the popper is frayed. This fraying is unavoidable, but troublesome-part of the reason you keep your entire whip length at no more than 10 feet. This frayed flax can catch in the overhead netting, and it's happened to many performers. You can almost never pull your whip loose from the snag, & there you are looking ridiculous, tugging it to no avail-and you can't leave it swinging for the cats to target. Keep your length down & work the whip only in open areas of the arena. Re-wax your popper between shows.

Naturally, I'd studied Beatty's poppers & observed their construction, but like any First of May, I was all thumbs

with my first 2 or 3. Soon, I made some good ones, & was proud when Beatty used them-but I was still taking 3 or 4 minutes to roll one. I got all the stuff out one day between shows, when the Old Man appeared by my side. Ready to go before me were:

TOOLS & SUPPLIES:

Barbour's No. 10 Shoe Flax Ice Pick
Rosined beeswax Cup (or similar) hook
Sharp knife or razor blade Callouses on your fingers
Beatty asked, "Where'd you see these made, boy?" I told him I'd watched a couple of old-timers around the show. He boxed the air with his fists & his curly hair went to bouncing. "Aw, gee, boy, I can roll 'em up faster than that! Give me that stuff!"

With his energy in customary over-drive-the quality that projected from his steel arena right into his audience-he grabbed that skein of flax, boy, & quickly wound 7 wraps about 5 inches long from the hook. He cut these strands in half, stropped them heavily with wax, & set this section aside. And he took the flax again & would off a loop of 14 wraps 16" long. On the right side, he drew one strand another 6" longer. He cut the loop in half, tossed the longer single to one side & stropped the 14 strands first on one side, then the other, keeping the single dry of wax. He laid the long length onto the hook, making the ends even. He added the short 7-strand length on top, with one-third of it to the left, & two-thirds down the right, giving the loop both re-inforcement, & the desired taper. This re-enforcement is necessary. When the sound barrier is broken at the crack of the whip, this bend in the popper takes tremendous torque. If it is not re-inforced, your popper will break at this point & fly off the cracker of the lash, providing your cats something to chase. Beatty smoothed the dry, single strand, & boy, he twisted those lengths at the hook in tight, vertical, opposite directions, & rapidly began winding them into one another. When he wound down to the end of the short side of the re-inforcement, he tugged out the dry strand, circled the popper, drew the end through, & tied down twice around. he re-engaged the dry single, & wound down to the long end of the taper, & again circled the popper & tied in twice, just above the cut ends. Then, he twisted the 2 sides in tight opposite rotations, winding them together, continuing down another 2". He again pulled loose the dry single, & tied off only once below the taper. On the fall of the popper, he wanted he ties to come loose & allow the popper to work down by 2" sections, tight as the ties still were.

(Continued on Page 13)

Down the twisted strands he went, tying off, twisting, tying off every 2", until he left 2" of the ends open at the finish. He cut the dry single even, & boy, he stropped that thing side to side, front to back 4 times-no more-you can get too much wax on a popper. By now he had a glistening sweat on his brow & those dark curls just a-dancin'. "There, boy!" he exclaimed. "Gotta roll those things right up! You're learnin', you're learnin'." And in just under 90 seconds he left a popper so tight it stood out nearly straight from the hook.

While watching him, I noticed for the first time his tough callouses on the stress spots of fingers which had rolled many a popper. I was delighted when I cultivated first blisters, then callouses of my own, accepting the rule, "If yer fingers don't ache, ya done it wrong."

Run your ice pick through the popper's loop & twist it open enough so you can pull the lash's cracker through. Move the popper on with the length standing up from the top (the smooth side) of the cracker. Ease open the slit of the cracker, pull the popper through from the top, tug it down, slide it tight down the cracker into a snug fit. Re-wind the loop of the popper against the cracker for a final set-in.

Now you've earned yourself something to look at. You've romanced & finished your whipstock, cut & plaited your flat lash, & hand-rolled a tapered Barbour's flax popper. If your preference is Old School circus, you're on the arrows.

With cramping, aching fingers, I make a hell of a tight, long-lasting popper, that's for sure. But I confess, for the life of me, I've never beat the Old Man's 90 seconds!

Next issue: Clyde Beatty's Whipbox-An Insider's Personal Tour.

After that: Gaffing Beatty's Chairs.

And then: Dynamics of the Steel Arena.

(In future articles, Roger will introduce the cast of characters at Jungleground at the time when Mabel Stark worked there-some who were devotedly supportive of Mabel, if not for her often hard-to-take outer shell, then at least in respect for her 56 years as a trainer-and others who were bitterly envious of her & bitterly vehement against her. Roger was there to observe every day of it, & along with many telling insights about the day-to-day Mabel, he is going to tell the ugly truth about her ultimate, and cruel, closing hours. If anyone has photos of her that I could borrow for these articles, please send them along & I will copy them and return them to you. Thanks, Cherie.)

"ELEPHANTS"

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

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RUMBLINGS FROM THE CRUMMY

By Brian Nunn

It seems to me, while working with animals, they have to know what you expect of them, and if they're comfortable with this procedure; it's a coordinated and easy process. If they're unhappy or uncomfortable in some way, it's not so easy or coordinated. It's clumsy.

I've had some animals around me, dogs mostly, that kind of take it upon themselves to make it all easier on their own. Sometimes their way of doing things is astonishing; like my dog Bogart, who would watch traffic lights to know when to cross the street, or Suds, who would, at his convenience, cruise thru town to the places he knew I'd go to, and make himself welcome-sometimes a friend's flower bed or a woman's bedroom. I'd get a call now and then saying, "Your dog's here." I'd say, "That's OK. If he's a bother, tell him to go. He'd usually just wait, 'cuz he knew I'd show up sooner or later. I loved that dog. He stayed with me through good and bad.

Another one was Mr. Dawg; in my opinion, the best elephant dog that ever lived. He just knew the right thing to do. With the occasional infraction of biting someone wearing a uniform. For some reason, this dog just couldn't figure out that a stranger had authority, uniform or not. Which, by the way, landed him in jail quite a bit. He had to be flown 600 miles one time to catch up with the show (with the help of some good friends). He was a happy puppy to get to see Gardner, the bull elephant again. They were best friends. This brings me to remember Woofier, Rex's dog. This dog could just lay around, lift her head and bark at some infraction in the department, which in turn, would alert all the hands that something was amiss. She taught Dawg everything he knew. He just got over enthusiastic about it now and then. Woofier was cool.

To get back to the first paragraph, I've watched a lot of good animal trainers thru the years. And, as I've said before, many times, the good ones go in and get it done, then get away from them so that later sessions can be accomplished with very little contact, using the same authority and energy that was used originally.

The animal knows what's expected. I don't like it much when I see people keep peckin' away at some poor poodle, or some such critter. I see this at the park, on the street; a lot of people are dumber than their pets. You go in, let them know what you want; don't stop till they're getting the idea, are volunteering, or at least not fighting it. They seem to be happy to do what's expected and

most of them do it with panache. I think they enjoy the work. But! At any rate, they learn to know that if they get the job done correctly, they get to go back to what they were doing before; at peace, relaxed and not bothered anymore.

All these things I harp about, I learned from the school of hard knocks; Rex Williams, and Jack Fitzgerald, of the Bar-F-Bar Ranch (where I learned how to shoe horses.)

Bucky Steele has a pretty good way to go too. I never worked with him much. I don't know anybody that can fault him.

Animal activists seem to believe the world should be at peace and the order of what each living being was born to do. This would be nice, for doggies, bears, you name it, the list can go on for weeks.

The way I see it, animals at work, whether being your pet (which is work in itself) or plowing fields, hauling logs, carrying tourists thru the jungle to take pictures of tigers. You name it; dog and pony acts have been going on longer than the bible.

With the exception of dolphins, the ocean is the only place humans haven't interfered with, except to eat everything we can catch, kill and harvest.

Unless! You want to include us humans polluting the water shed and the ocean to our greedy hearts delight, for the last 2000 years. There's just more of us now. Sooo— If you have to be a unrealistic pain in the neck, go bother the governments of the world. Make them clean it up; then make a haven somewhere for all these animals you all think you have to think for. Please don't get me wrong. I've got nothing against people with strong ideals. I say, if you don't have a sense of humor, & some understanding, along with intelligence, I don't need to hear it.

Alfred "Fredonias" Fullgrapp, 77, passed away 3/17 in Sarasota. He was born in Germany. He was a performer with the Ringling Circus and specialized in acrobatics. Survivors include his wife, Elli; a daughter Ilona Harnas, Sarasota; 3 sons, Roy, Ralph & Bernd all of Sarasota.

Heidi Herriott reports Maryland will have performing elephants AND elephant rides this year, as the bill was defeated!! This is a definite WIN for the industry. Also, Clyde Beatty Circus WON in South Hampton, NY, as the town council said it was OK for the animals to be there. Heidi will have more news for the next issue!



King Bros. 1960



Hagen Bros. 1960





Last Photo Taken

Chuck, Joy, Ron

Jupiter

Back Yard
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