

# BACK YARD

Volume III, Issue #44

May 31, 1998

## BRUTES OF THE BIG TOP

BY BILL BALLANTINE PART V

Ringling's youngers also got charcoal powder, resin, soda and an extra ration of sorghum. "Ain't nothin' makes blood like sorghum molasses," said Smokey. "Without blood you're nothin'." The amount of hay an elephant eats daily depends upon individual appetite, the personal ideas of the bullboss & the attitude of the management footing the bill. A full-grown elephant can subsist on a daily feeding of as little as 30 pounds of timothy hay mixed with the same amount of wheat straw. A good elephant feeder will see that his animals get fruits & vegetables (about 12 pounds each per day.)

Circus elephants eke out their regular food allotment by foraging among soft-hearted candy butchers, workhands & the passing public for doughnuts, cotton candy, pop, popcorn, pie, coffee-cake, toasted cheese sandwiches, watermelon rind, ice cream and popsicles, loaves of bread (in one bite with wrapper), coffee (paper cup included) & Tums (singly or by the box). For roughage elephants scrounge coal, dirt & gravel. They love tobacco, contrary to popular belief, & enjoy sniping butts in the gutters on their walks to & from the train. They really like whisky!

"Elephants eats everything," claims Smokey, "exceptin' meat. They'll even eat sardines if you leave them in the closed can." Jenny, a Polack Bros. Circus elephant, once made all the wire services by eating \$117.45 of the NY Central Railroad's money when an Arlington, Ohio telegrapher tossed a package containing that amount into the Polack stock car believing it to be the rail-



road's official baggage car. An unsung hungry elephant named Zip once broke out of its confinement at winter quarters of a small mud show (Ring Bros.), demolished 3 brand new cages, frightened 3 kangaroos, & then ate a 9 foot length of chain. "She died a'course," said Smokey, chewing into a huge, greasy porkchop sandwich that one of the bullhands had brought him from the cookhouse, which Smokey seldom visits.

(Continued on Page 4)

## BACK YARD

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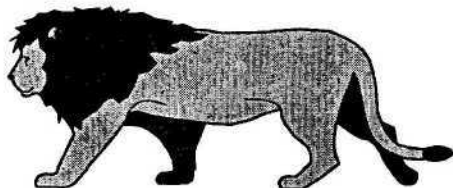
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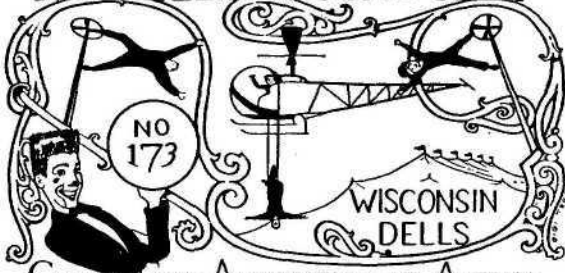
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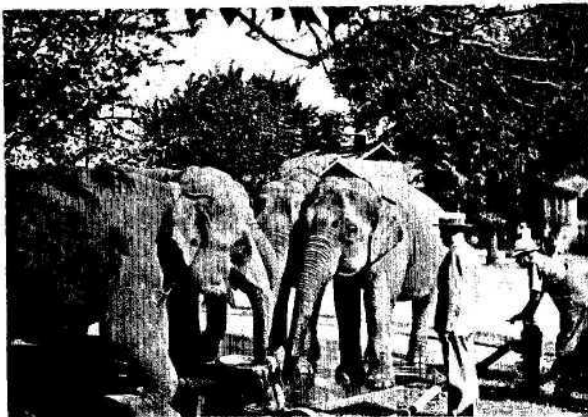


CIRCUS FANS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

### NERVELESS NOCKS TENT RAISING 7/2

Official Tent Raising of the Nerveless Nocks Tent #173 will be held on Thursday, July 2nd, at the 8:30 p.m. performance of the Tommy Bartlett Thrill Show in Wisconsin Dells. Following the performance, the Nocks will be honored at a special dinner catered by Houlihan's/Copa Cabana. Overnight accommodations are available at the Copa Cabana (adjacent to the Bartlett Show), & the Nock Family will again join us for a Friday morning brunch.

Cost for the Bartlett Show & Dinner is \$18. per person & \$12. for the Friday brunch. Reservations for this once-in-a-lifetime occasion must be made no later than June 18th. Make checks payable to The Nerveless Nocks Tent #173, & mail to: Jill Martin, Treas., 214 5th Ave., Baraboo, WI 53913. Reservations for overnight accommodations should be made by calling the Copa Resort at: 1-800-364-2672. Please mention that you are attending the Nocks Tent Raising. Rates for our group for 7/2 are \$75. for double & \$85. for double/queen room. Any questions call Mary-Jane Foote at 608-264-6425 days Mon.-Thurs.; 608-255-7431 weeknights; or 414-642-9208 weekends.



**FROM CNN NEWS: 2/11/98: BALD CHIMP  
SNAPS, CRACKLES, POPS HIS WAY TO  
NEW COAT. Twycross, England**

Once upon a time, Jambo was the most handsome chimp in the zoo in Twycross, England. But then, inexplicably, his chocolate-colored mane started to fall out! Mystified zookeepers treated Jambo for allergies, tried antibiotics & even fungicides. But, says zoo director Molly Badham, "nothing made any difference at all." Indeed, Jambo was so completely miserable without his hair that the zoo's vet even considered euthanizing him.

But coming to Jambo's rescue was Jean Brown, an herbalist who prescribed a most unusual combination of concoctions. She started feeding him goat's milk loaded with Rice Krispies! She also administered a cream containing an herbal mixture. And, voila, Jambo's coat has started to grow back. "There must be one of the oils that's in the cream, or the extracts from the goat's milk, that is stimulating the follicles to make it grow," theorizes Brown.

And as news of Jambo's fortune has started to spread, follically-challenged males have started ringing up Brown. "We've got lots & lots of orders going out to people, & we're hoping that we should get the same results with them as we have with the chimp."

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**BARABOO LOVES ITS ELEPHANTS**

The following is a partial reprint from the Chicago Tribune on Oct. 14, 1966 by Richard Orr. It tells how the Ringling Bros. brought their first elephant to Baraboo & the elephants at the Circus World Museum. Reprinted with permission of The White Tops, Official Publication of the Circus Fans Assn. of America, from Sept. 1966 issue.

Some time after the museum opened in 1949, a Madison, WI woman wrote a letter of mild complaint about the elephant smell "amid all the wonderful exhibits that we saw." It drew from the late John Kelley, museum president & long-time attorney for the Ringling circus, a reply that in itself may go down in circus history. Kelley wrote in part:

"I will do my best to help correct your apparent misunderstanding relating to the fitness, rapture, & tonic wrapped up in the museum's elephant smell. The function of smell is to impart fragrance acceptable to varied tastes, & the elephant variety stands preeminent in prity, strength, constancy & pungency. "A lady of your fine discernment should not remain aloof & out of step with the marching throngs that mellow their mood & happily

relax in the exhilarating sniff of elephant smell. Its lodgement even in the home contributes comfort, confidence & peace. No wife of an elephant handler has ever sued for divorce. It is only smell that knits the family tie. Conversion to elephant smell is educational & like the olive or garlic, one has to cultivate a taste for it. You can not feel it-yet it clings like a mother's love. Its vaporized essence is so real that you can't dilute it, dissolve it, liquefy it, freeze it, smother it, counterfeit it, cut it, shake it or lose it!

It's attachment has the tinge of the fee simple. Little wonder that America's millions in circus museum & zoo have rallied with amazing schnozzle aptitude for this wondrous smell. Its fragrance is nationalized. Historically, Robert Bruce watched & waited for the spider to try again. I invite you to again visit the museum. Take a deeper breath into the volume of its penetrating fragrance. Be convinced! Elephant smell is the 4th dimension in the scope of museum features-and it is free! It is bouquet attachment you may enjoy while you are there-and you will proudly carry it with you."

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\*From Boston, 5/23: Boston Garden lore took on another odd chapter-even after the venerable arena's demolition-with the discovery of monkey bones amid the rubble.

Said to house gremlins who plagued visiting basketball teams, the former home of the Celtics built in 1928 was dreaded for problems real & imaginary, but there were never reports of a resident monkey.

The mysterious remains found in the wreckage last week prompted demolition workers to pause for a moment of silence. "The Celtics might have to change their mascot," former Garden director Larry Moulter said. "This obviously was a true fan."

Visiting teams over the years complained about dead spots in the Garden's famed parquet floor & perceived sights like the occasional lack of hot water in the showers, but none ever mentioned a rogue monkey swinging off the backboard to swat away jumpshots. Officials have no idea where the monkey might have come from.

The remains didn't look old enough to be from the great monkey escape of 1936, when Frank Buck's "Bring 'Em Back Alive" animal show nearly lost a passel of monkeys during the show. And besides, all those feisty critters were supposedly rounded up! A check with Ringling didn't turn up any leads either, despite the circus was there in 1994. And although monkeys were part of an old "Wizard of Oz" show at the garden, none were reported missing!" Let's ask Larry Byrd!!!

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

This between-shows time is the most pleasant part of a circus day, & the quietest. The matinee is over. The towners have all drifted home to supper. Twilight is waiting. For an hour or so time hangs heavy. It is a period of lassitude & lament, a time of grousing & grievance.

From what Smokey told me I'd advise anyone planning to buy an elephant to help around a ranch or farm that such an animal is a difficult piece of livestock. It requires pedicures, treatment for corns, callouses & bothersome cuticles. It needs to be swept off & brushed twice daily, scrubbed once a week & oiled twice a year (neatsfoot, rubbed in good). An elephant must be shaved regularly-all over, with a blowtorch. Footpads are subject to abrasions-breaks & infections. Toenails develop cracks much like a run in ladies' nylons. If you plan on 2 elephants you'll have the problem of tail bites. Baby elephants often come down with colic & pink eye. Imports always arrive in bad shape from their ocean voyage; must be dewormed & rid of intestinal parasites. Senior elephants develop encapsulated ear abscesses, the size of a man's fist, & progressive inflexibility of the trunk.

It's not easy to give pills to an elephant. The tongue is so powerful that nothing disapproved gets past it. You put your hand in an elephant's mouth to force medicine down the throat only if you feel you can get along in life minus one hand! Nose nostrums can't be administered to an elephant for obvious reasons of distance & super agility of the nose. It isn't a simple matter to take an elephant's temperature-it is so easy to lose the thermometer. Elephants are very susceptible to chills. As a remedy, vets advise an injection of camphorated oil & a colorless shrub distillate called guaicol, but bullhands swear by brandy as a cure, with bourbon, rye & Tennessee sour-mash as runners-up! "C'm'here," said Smokey, beckoning me over to one of his elephants. "Did you ever see an elephant's tongue?" With both hands he held open a yawning slimy mouth. "Look, it's fastened at both ends." And so it was. "Touch it," Smokey suggested, but I declined. "They has teeth, too," he added. "There's a big grinder molar on each side with one more growin'-in in back of each one, shovin' it for'ard. When the new one is ready, the old one is either spit out, pulled out by the trunk or chewed up. Elephants gets 6 sets in a lifetime, each'un bigger'n the one before. The final one measures about 3 inches by 6. Dentists is always pesterin' us for them. Damn'fi know what they

does with them. Paperweights, I guess, or doorstops!" When Mr. North's \$100,000 pack of elephants finished their performance that night, they were brought by Smokey & his cracking bull-whip to a quivering line-up just outside the main area of the circus townsquare. There the excited elephants were sorted out & neck-chained in twos & threes for their long trudge back to the train. This job seemed to be accomplished by an uncanny knowledge of elephant silhouette on Smokey's part, plus a nice measure of sheer instinct, for by now it was inky dark.

When all 51 elephants were in their proper march positions, Smokey mounted old Harold & clattered over to me. He handed me a bull-hook. "Okay, you git on Knaudie; she's the lead elephant. Pony Red'll help you mount. Red, you show him." And Smokey was off, trotting toward the rear of his low ridge of heaving dark mountains. I wasn't prepared for this sudden introduction to the living, breathing actuality of an elephant. "C'mon," said Red without enthusiasm. It took 2 tries to get me aboard. At Red's command, "Kan-NOW-dee, *trunk!*" the elephant lowered her head, raising her trunk enough so that, by stepping quite high, I could plant my left foot onto it. Red commanded me to grab the elephant's headpiece strap with both hands. Then Knaudie hoisted me by curling her trunk skyward. I flung my right leg over her neck & scrambled on, quickly shifting my hands.

All 51 elephants, 23 bullhands & their master Smokey must have been waiting for me to make contact, for as soon as I was astraddle the entire line executed an abrupt right face, & we were off through the night in a fast-paddling shuffle. The suddenness of the take-off was startling; I barely had a good seat! We hadn't gone 10 feet before I was gripped with panic, afraid that I was going to fall. I felt every bullhand's eyes riveted on me. I was somehow being tested by Smokey & the entire elephant department, including, I'm sure, the bulls themselves. In a few moments I got hold of myself; the hysterical surge calmed. I found that by veering a little to the right I could manage to hang on to this heaving mass-of-muscle. There is no feeling like that of riding an elephant. Every muscle of your body gets a stiff workout. Hips & belly are thrown into violent contortions. Calves & thighs stretch & strain. The chain that shackled 2 elephant punks to Knaudie's right side pushed tight against my foot. At the neck the chain bit into my clutching fingers. With Knaudie's every heave my tail-bone rammed her hard spine. At the big elephant's head, on Harold the horse, rode Smokey, carrying a powerful flashlight with a large red lens. (I discovered later that the elephant bringing up the rear wore, a red reflector button big as a

soup plate.) Smokey called up to me, "How-re you doin'?" "F-f-fine uh I un-uh guess!" I managed to grunt. "If you feel like you're slippin' off, jest yell out, 'Come in line!' good an' loud an' everybody'll stop an' face into the curb. That's out signal." "Oh-ho-o ho-ho-kay," I replied, almost wishing I'd slip so that I could test my command over 51 elephants, 23 bullhands & Smokey Jones! Just about then Harold chose to horse around with Miss Knaudie, stretching his neck to give her sashaying trunk a love nip. "His teeth is strong enough, but he ain't go enough mouth," Smokey laughed. I didn't. The elephant gave such a heavy lurch I thought sure I was a goner! After a while Knaudie began to sneak vast sly kicks with one hind leg at the elephant behind her. This didn't sit well with me either. For the first 10 blocks I wasn't conscious of anything except my loins, legs & hands. All I could see were the stiff hairs on Miss Knaudie's knobby head, Harold's dappled-gray rump, Smokey's dazzlingly white shirt-back, his bobbing ruby light, & blurs of asphalt & concrete. No sky, no moon, no stars, no trees, no houses. Then confidence began to creep back; I could sneak little looks around. All along our route little clumps of people stood back in the shadows of their enameled porches, on their manicured lawns or at curbside under the street lamps. Piping, screeching kids came along with us, some on foot, others on bikes which made the elephants skittish. "Hey! Look! They got holes in their ears!" "They're droppin' bombs!" A couple of times Knaudie scattered the shrilling punks by spraying them with a little slime gagged up from her tired insides. Some flew back on me but I could do nothing about it. Harold's shoes made a hollow clatter on the paving. From behind came a monstrous soft shuffle-an army of grandfathers in carpet slippers. I didn't dare look back; surely I'd have lost my precarious seat! I finally discovered the secret of elephant riding-a relaxed attitude. After I learned to roll with my vehicle, it was great. From Smokey I picked up the basic signals. Because of the port-side walking position of the bullhand, to go left is, "Come here," to go right is, "Move over." The orders work just as well when given from a perch atop the elephant's head or from its back. "Move up" means to go ahead; "Back" indicates steady or stop. Elephants do not reverse well! From the dark of a coal yard, at a point where the railroad tracks came closest to the street, we were signaled by a waving flashlight beam. Smokey trotted up to it & found Danny Dooley, the elephant cars' aged watchman. The bull-boss became angry. He told me that Dooley's feet are poor & the man

couldn't walk very well. "Who 'n hell sent you away out here?" Smokey demanded. "Whyn't one of them young punks come out with the signal?" Dooley muttered an apologetic something that I couldn't catch from my high seat, then limping & hopping bravely ahead with bobbing flashlight, he guided our column of heaving shadows. We weaved past water tanks, under low trestles & came upon the elephant cars, great 72-footers painted silver. They'd been cleaned out during the day, evidently at some other spot. The dim light of a single bulb filtered through the skinny cracks of the wooden slatted sides. "Come in line!" yelled Smokey, quickly dismounting. "Knaudie DOWN!" The elephant dipped her head. Smokey shouted at me, "Slide off!" I did, & my battered buttocks were throbbing!

Loading the elephants began almost immediately. A heavy wooden ramp led to the yawning door of each stock car, where a bullhand, with flashlight dangling either from pants belt or neck loop, waited to guide each elephant to its regular position inside. (The elephants stand crosswise in the car, chained to its inside walls.) One of the cars was the bullhand dormitory but it also quartered 3 elephants. There was much shuffling about in the narrow space alongside the cars to get the bulls organized for their overnight journey. The almost pitch black darkness was leavened with great heavings, rumblings, snorts and whimpers, plus sharp barkings of human orders. "Joss-s-s-kee! Back!"... "Marcella, you jughead!"... "Juuuu-dee!" Some were gentle: "C'mon, Bay-y-y-buh." Some rough: "MAY-ry, UP!" Some were loving: "Modoc, baby, you come here, baby. Steady now, ole gurl."

The loading went well until Joske decided that the ramp on her car was impossible to negotiate. It was a great deal steeper than the others because of a sudden falling away of the ground by the door. Joske stubbornly dug in & growled like a fierce bulldog. A few raindrops began to fall. "I knew it," said Smokey. "Rain! Damit! We ain't got troubles enough."

Hugo Schmidt came along with 3 elephants. He was just a large dim shape in the dark, but his voice was unmistakable. Joske was pulled aside while Hugo's ladies were loaded in an adjacent car. "Loo-nah! Kom. ROOT! Mar-zella, komezee. Yooo-ah! Go ahait!" Then, to the boy inside the car, as the first elephant lumbered up the ramp, "Take him! Take him!" When the trio was safely in, Hugo & Smokey held a conference. Subject: Miss Joske, delinquent! (Continued on Page 6)

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

"She done this on me once before," said the younger man. "Yah, yah," said Hugo, "I 'member. Ve had to take her to crossing und wait for the train to moof up. Vait, I load Rah-gee, then we dry her again." Hugo disappeared into the deeper dark & came back with one of the babies. "Rah-gee, he coaxed gently. "Oh, da klinenah. Rah-geee oop. Rah-gee." Rajah was put to bed with only a few protesting squeals. "Boy, them mosquitoes is bad," said Smokey, lighting a cigarette. Joske balked on her next 3 loading tries. "She's gettin' ready to run," announced Smokey. He took a long glowing drag on his smoke. "Well, there goes *this* night." Some of the young bullhands had tucked in. From the bunks in the next car came snores, nightmarish snorts & heavy terrorized breathing. "Git me a chain," Smokey ordered one of the tense hands. "We'll chain her to that telegraph pole 'til she calms down." Glancing nervously at the black sky, he added, "I sure hope that rain holds off."

Then for what must have been an hour nothing happened. Everybody either just sat on their hunkers, stretched flat on the cinders beside the track or reclined on the ramp. Little cigarette glows pierced the blackness. No one talked & the mosquitoes were fierce. Every so often Joske's chain would clink a little, so I knew she was still at the pole. "Well, let's give her another try," Smokey finally announced. "Git the chains off." One of the assistants suggested, "Chain her up to Jewel & see if she can coax her in." This didn't work. Smokey was becoming angry. "You dam heifer!" he snarled at the balky elephant. "Come HERE!" "How's about that long run on the punk's car?" someone stabbed out of the dark. "Yeah," said Smokey. "Git it an' we'll try it." The run was brought & hefted into place by all available hands. The reluctant elephant was led to it. "Now I dry," said Hugo. "Bas AUF!" he shouted at Joske with all the power in his thick Teutonic chest. "BAS AUF! Kom *here!* Jos-*keel!*" The big elephant shifted just a little toward the ramp. "Get a-holt her tail & pull her ofer," yelled Hugo.

"Look out," cautioned Smokey. "Git back, you guys. I've seen her throw that run!" But now, bit by agonizing bit, Joske inched up the ramp. Finally, after much furious strain & low bilingual cursing, all but one long back leg was in the car. "Ofer mit the leg, mein lieber," Hugo coaxed again & again, softly now. "Bas-auf, Jos-s-ske. Ba-a-ahs auf, mein lie-e-e-ber." It was almost a lullaby. Suddenly, with a tremendous heave, the leg lifted & moved inside the car. There was a flash of lightning & I could see that Hugo and Smokey both were drenched

with sweat. The murderous skies opened. Rain fell in furious sheets. "At least God likes elephants," said Smokey. Then jamming me in the ribs with his bull-hook, he yelled, "C'mon! There's a diner down at the crossin'. Le's high-tail it outa here a'fore we gets drownd-ded. C'mon!" We splattered up to "the crossing"--of highway & street with railroad tracks--the place where all the circus equipment is loaded onto the train. Smokey strolled over to the yellow-slickered circus train-master, standing in the glare that lighted the area, directing the "crossing cats" (loading tractors).

"Did you spot this train?" Smokey asked belligerently. "Yeah, Smokey, don't I always?" answered the train-master. "You oughta get promoted!" "What'sa matter, Smokey?" the train boss asked good naturedly. "You're all wet. Ain't you got sense enough to get in outa the rain?" He reached to touch Smokey's shoulder, but the elephant boss jerked away.

"Don't touch me. You make me dirty." Then he stalked off to Elsie's Dew Drop Inn which was dry & warm with the smell of hamburgers, french-fries & coffee. After 5 cokes and a steak, Smokey was ready to forgive his stubborn elephant, but not the train-boss who'd caused the car to be in the awkward spot. "Some of them elephants can be real mean sometimes, but the train-masters is always mean. Joske was jest confused. She could'a easy took off, but she didn'. She ain't what you'd call a bad elephant. Man, what a night! Bet they had one sweet hell of a time gettin' off that lot. Bet they ain't off yet. The biggest job of working elephants at the night tear-down of the circus is to pull down quarter poles by means of drag-chain & snubbing rope operated by a big top workhand. An elephant with good helpers is able to drop 2 & 3 poles at one time. "C'mon," announced Smokey suddenly. "We gotta blow this joint. I gotta 7 a.m. call." It was then almost 2. Behind the partially loaded flat cars standing at the crossing a string of empty flats was quietly clicking by. "So long," yelled Smokey, jabbing my aching ribs again. "Them's the flats for the third section. They're probably goin' near to where the second section coaches is." He took off through the downpour, clambered nimbly over the standing flats, crossed 4 or 5 strips of track in giant reckless strides & hopped one of moving cars. Smokey Jones, elephant expert extraordinary, clattered off into the night, home to his wife & stateroom clean across the middle of a car with 2 windows. A glint of light caught his bull-hook as he saluted good-by to me.....The End....

**COMING SOON TO BACK YARD,  
"CATCHERS AND LEAPERS" BY BILL  
BALLANTINE, 1953, TRUE MAGAZINE !!!!!**

From 4/4/53 Billboard: "True Tales: Aerial Antics Tossed Around In Mag Yarn": Bill Ballantine, who toured last year with Ringling, writes convincingly in the April issue of True Magazine about circus trapeze artists in an article entitled, "Catchers and Leapers." As a self-confessed visiting artist, writer & circus fan, Ballantine has done a good job in describing the trials & tribulations of people like Fay & Rose Alexander, Del & Babs Graham, Willie Krause, Jeannie Sleeter & Jimmy Crocker, trapeze artists. One event in the yarn deals with Gen. Mgr. Arthur Concello, himself an expert trapeze artist, who went aloft to make a preliminary test while Cecil De Mille was filming "The Greatest Show on Earth." Cornel Wilde, playing the part of the Great Sabastian, was to have missed a trick while flying aloft without a net, and was to plunge 40 feet to the ground. De Mille wouldn't use a dummy, so at Sarasota winter quarters a pit with width of the net was dug 7 feet thru the center ring, the net stretched over the pit & the whole thing covered with camouflaging dirt & shavings. Concello, according to the story, didn't bother to change his clothes. Doffing his coat, he swung out, did a somersault, dropped, sank into the net-and came up sopping wet. The pit had filled with 4 feet of water during the night. But he had the net straightened out & went up immediately. This time, he dropped flat & the tightened net stayed above water. Then Fay went up as Wilde's double & performed the same fall, moving too fast to be picked up by the cameras, he had to re-do the fall. This gave Fay his biggest thrill. **COMING SOON TO BACK YARD!!!**

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Asked what a butcher is from the San Francisco School of Arts Questions On-Line, Bobby Hakes answers: A butcher is the vendor in the circus, no matter what he sells. Cherry Pie is the extra work they give on joining the show, such as building the ring fence or putting up the back-door curtains, or ushering the public to their seats. Jobs you must do, but you get paid for doing them. We have another expression called, "Chinese," that is work you do & don't get paid for. A "rubber man" is what we call balloon peddlers, and garbage-men are novelty peddlers, and floss-men are Cotton Candy peddlers.

**CHARLIE'S TEX-MEX CASSEROLE  
FROM CHARLIE SIMPSON, HOUSTON**

Ingredients:

Crisp Tortilla Chips  
1 Large Can Chili Con Carne (No beans)  
1 Can Mexicorn (Drained)  
1 Cup Chopped Onion  
1 Garlic Button, Minced or Garlic Powder  
1 Small Can Chopped Mild Green Chilis  
Grated Sharp Cheddar Cheese

In a deep baking dish, crumble a layer of tortilla chips; add a layer of Mexicorn, green chilis, onion & garlic; cover with a layer of Chili Con Carne & cheese. Repeat this until dish is full. Top with cheese. Cover & bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes until cheese is melted & dish is bubbly. Serve with green salad, salsa and chips on the side.

For dessert, break out the Pepto Bismol!!

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**Romeo's Favorite Dish #?, or California  
Crow's Nest:**

Take a large skillet; and use a 6 oz. bar glass or something like it. Cut a round hole in the middle of a couple pieces of bread. Put some butter or oil in the skillet, over medium heat. Put the bread in when they be sizzlin' good; break an egg into each hole of the soon to be toast. Depending on how you like your eggs, flip when you want to. This always cuts up nice on the plate. I cook some sausage first & use the grease to do the rest. Put all the round pieces in with it to help soak up the yolk. Hash browns are fun to eat, but that's another story. Onion, lite garlic, crispy spuds, the next time. The answer to the question about the Tarzan movies in the next exciting episode of Back Yard!!!!

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**Lorraine Valentine's Spanish Rice:**

Take 1/2 cup uncooked rice; 6 strips of bacon; 1 pound ground beef; 1 medium onion; salt & pepper to taste; 2 cups tomatoes. Brown the rice, bacon (cut in small pieces), sliced onion & ground beef. Add tomatoes & seasonings & cover closely. Simmer until rice is tender. Add some water at intervals.

**Valentine's Beer Bread**

Take 3 cups self-rising flour or 4 cups biscuit mix; 3 T. Sugar; 1-12 oz. bottle or can of bear-even Busch!

1. Put flour into large bowl; add beer & mix thoroughly. 2. Spread in a greased 9x5x3 loaf pan. 3. Bake 375 degrees for 45-60 minutes or until done.

**127th EDITION RINGLING RED UNIT:**

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San Antonio, TX-Freeman Coliseum-July 1-5  
Austin, TX-Erwin Sp.Events Ctr-July 9-12  
College Station, TX-Reed Arena-July 14-15  
Houston, TX-Compaq Ctr-July 17-26  
Dallas, TX-Reunion Arena-July 29-Aug. 9  
Fort Worth, TX-Tarrant Cty Coliseum-Aug. 12-16  
Colorado Springs, CO-World Arena-Aug. 20-23

**128TH EDITION RINGLING BLUE UNIT:**

Rochester, NY-Rochester War Memorial-June 5-7  
Lexington, KY-Rupp Arena-June 11-14  
Lubbock, TX-Memorial Coliseum-June 18-21  
Las Vegas, NV-Thomas & Mack Center-June 26-28  
Phoenix, AZ-America West Arena-July 1-5  
Fresno, CA-Fresno Convention Ctr-July 9-12  
Long Beach, CA-Long Beach Arena-July 15-19  
Los Angeles, CA-LA Sports Arena-July 22-26  
Anaheim, CA-Arrowhead Pond-July 28 to Aug. 4  
Inglewood, CA-Great Western Forum-Aug. 6-9  
San Diego, CA-Sports Arena-Aug. 12-16  
Oakland, CA-August 19-23

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

**Roberts Bros. Circus:** Wooster, OH-6/4; Upper  
Sandusky, OH-6/5; Norwalk, OH-6/6; LaGrange-6/7;  
Hartville, OH-6/11; Beaver Hills, PA-June 13.

**Garden Bros. Circus:** Chatham, Ontario-6/2;  
Windsor, Ontario-June 6-7

**Circus Fans Convention:** Cleveland, OH-6/17-21

**Circus City Festival:** Peru, IN-July 11-18

**Great Circus Parade:** Milwaukee, WI-Aug. 2

**American Carousel Society Convention:** San  
Francisco, CA: June 10-14. Help welcome the 1905  
"Playland" Loeff Carousel back home in its new lo-  
cation at Yerba Buena Gardens. They will also visit  
the 1911 Loeff in Santa Cruz & the 1912 Dentzel at  
the zoo.

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

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**Jack Smith**, animal tamer who trained the lions for "Quo Vadis" & herded his polar bears like sheep around Holly-wood died at 91, from the March 7, London Telegraph: The appeal of "Quo Vadis", 1951, owed much to scenes of hapless Christians being fed to Smith's lions on the orders of a superbly lunatic, Emperor Nero, played by Peter Ustinov. Smith also doubled for Anthony Quinn as an Eskimo in "The Savage Innocents", 1960. His scenes required him to scamper across imitation ice flows to avoid the attentions of a peckish polar bear. Filming came to a standstill as the admiring crew watched Smith herd his troupe of polar bears from one studio to another like a flock of sheep. So impressed were the directors with his acting that they afterwards presented him with a handsome polar bear-skin rug. Smith said, "I have compassion for all captive animals. In every business involving man & animals there will be found men whom, through greed or ignorance, exploit or neglect their animals. Such people I detest. I have always fought vigorously for my own principles, & since good feeding is the basis of animal happiness, I have always insisted on the best food obtainable for the animals in my charge. My conscience is clear & when the time comes for me to go, I can say that I have done my best." For many years after his retirement, he assisted his son at the gate of the cage, helping to care for animals in their trust until he was almost 90. He worked for Robt. Fossett's Circus; for Trolle Rhodin; Billy Smart; Jimmy Chipperfield; and mostly with Circo Medrano.

### **BACK YARD GOSSIP...**

**Charlie Simpson** reports from Houston that while **Ringling Red Unit** is playing Mexico City, the coaches & 2 empty flats are stored at the Amtrak Station. They did the same thing with the Blue Unit last year; flying personnel to Mexico City & putting them in hotels. After the Mexico City date is completed, the train will be re-assembled in Houston & the tour resumed. Charlie went down to the train & reports that the coaches look great! The folks that did not go to Mexico are living on the train. Charlie hopes to visit the site again when they come back & watch the train put together again....

**Al House** reports from New Jersey that **Beatty-Cole** missing showing in Indian Head, MD on May 13-14, due to flooded grounds. This was a new town. Substituted was an old town, LaPlata, at the St. Charles Co. Fairgrounds. They were able to play both days, but conditions were very difficult for the show. Mud abounded & elephants & bulldozers were used. Unfortunately, the same was true for **Vidbel's Circus**. Lincoln Park, NJ was flooded on May 13, so they were not able to show. The lot was a staging area for the local residents who were flooded out & for local emergency equipment. **Scott O'Donnell & Jennifer Vidbel** were married just before the **Jaffa Shrine Temple** (Altoona, PA) date, April 13-19. Scott was instrumental in working out the details of the building when the show moved in. The Temple has chosen **Vidbel Productions** to produce next year's Shrine Circus. Many Ringling show people visited the **Beatty-Cole** lot on May 18, as the show made a move into Hershey, PA. Among the visitors were the **Ayala & Quiros** families. Both acts were B-C features...**Cirque du Soleil** is playing Battery Park in New York City until June 6. **The UniverSoul Circus** played Newark, NJ May 21-31. **Beatty-Cole** was also in the area May 22-29 & **Vidbel** played a 3 day stand in Brick, NJ, over the Memorial Day weekend. Talk about circus activity!! All shows have been nicely received in the press...**Denny**

**Childers** reports from Baraboo: On May 19, **Circus World Museum** received the only known Irish circus wagon to exist. At the **C. P. Fox Restoration Center**, the **America** is being restored to it's 1943 configuration. The **Cole Bros.** is coming off the skyboard & it will have **America** in its place. The main reason for this was the documentation available in the library for that year. **America** was in very bad shape, the carvings were really bad-mostly held together with plastic wood. The framework & planking is all new. Most of the original carvings were salvageable, but some had to be completely reproduced. When they began work on the boiler, of course they found asbestos, so they had to take all those precautions too, which slowed progress. They say it will be ready for the parade, but it will involve many long hours of overtime. The circus performance is truly outstanding. The 6 performing **Jacobs-Barreda African Bulls** was something! **Denny** had never seen anything like it. **Sylvia Zerbini** did a liberty act & her trapeze performance was unbelievable! She started her trap performance like many others end theirs! These acts along made the trip for **Denny** worthwhile...More news from the **Circus Model Builders Home Page** on the Net: **Bentley Bros.** is now under a new big top...**Delilah Wallenda's** family will headline the circus at **Americana Amusement Park** this year, located about halfway between Hamilton & Middletown, OH, on Route 4. If you are out traveling, please stop by to see them...**John Moss III**, ringmaster on **Carson & Barnes** is a new daddy. **John Moss IV** & mother are doing fine...On May 1, **Maury Povich** devoted a show entirely to the **Ringling Circus 128th Edition**...With the Spring, 1998 edition, Ringling will cease publication of their **3 Ring Gazette**. But, those of you with Net access can find them at <http://www.Ringling.com>\* Be sure to try their **P.T. Barnum Mail**...**Nancy Borcharding** has joined **Circus World Museum** as **Director of Sales**.

(Continued on Page 12)

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

Edward Yost, animal trainer, has recovered from facial wounds received when he was attacked by one of his mountain lions. 6 stitches were required between the nose & lower lip. Before a crowd of 2500, an elephant trumpeted & the animal made a break to get away, hitting Yost in the face with his paw...Playing Omaha for Rink Wright were **The Flying Valentines**; **The Laugs**, teeterboard; **5 Miller Elephants**; **Unus**; **Valentino Sisters & Cherie**, traps; **Victoria Troupe**, bikes; & **Bobo Barnett**, dogs... Three lions owned by **Capt. Dave Hoover** escaped their cages at Middletown, OH & were at large for 5 hours before being recaptured. The animals broke free when an assistant to Hoover let them into a training arena for exercise...April 4: **King Bros. & Cristiani Circus** opened the new season. The show is getting \$1.08 plus tax for general admission in Georgia and kids are 50 cents, plus tax. 8 girls on candy-striped ladders frame the effective cloud swing of **Manual Baragan**. Ladder girls are: **Eloise Berchtold**, **Corky Budd**, **Cosetta Cristiani**, **Chita Cristiani**, **Jerry Pressley**, **Jane King**, **Wanda Cristiani**, **Sylvia Carol** & **Barbara Fairchild**. The **Tripolls** click with the crowds for their springboard leaps. **Lucio Cristiani** wins big laughs with his comedy leaping, & **Tripoli Cristiani's** somersault over 5 bulls is a flashy closer. **Daviso Cristiani** heads up the menage display riding a beautiful gaited Palomino with good style in the ring & on the track. The family's bareback turn features **Lucio's** comic riding, dives & step-offs. **Mudadore**, **Belmonte**, **Oscar**, **Daviso**, **Corky** & **Hortans** take part in principal bits & the five-on-a-horse. 5 elephants move to the center spot for work by **Jane Cristiani** & **Steve Fanning**. **Hugo Zacchini's** human cannonball puts the smash finale on the strong performance. **Harry Thomas** is the ringmaster...**Hub Hubbell**, of the **Shooting Hubbells**, pistol & rifle marksmanship, is keeping busy with indoor dates in New England...**Jane Comeau**, mother of **Mickey King** & **Antoinette Concello**, has died in Bloomington, IL April 23...**Benton, AR: Diano Bros. Circus**-a severe storm hit & canvas billowed over some 2500 persons while the wild animal act was on, injuring 8 persons & giving one lion 30 minutes of freedom! **Arumi Singh** held the animal at bay until the spectators dispersed. The lion was one of 8 in the main arena when the tent blew down...**George Hanneford** is re-opening his motel-court

just outside Sarasota in December...**Ringling Bros.** ballet girls include: **Rose Alexander**, **Kay Burslem**, **Barbara Bowser**, **Charlotte Bell**, **Emma Castro**, **Dolly Copeland**, **Shirley Coombs**, **Delores Crouse**, **Brenda Elliott**, **Delores Garcia**, **Brenda Goring**, **Marion Hill**, **Hannelore Huck**, **Patricia Hooper**, **Elizabeth Johnson**, **Elsie Jung**, **Evelyn Kent**, **Pauline Kuntana**, **Margie Lawson**, **Anne McGuinness**, **Fannie McClosky**, **Sally Marlowe**, **Margo Margas**, **Mary Jane Miller**, **Dorothea Naporra**, **Phyllis Nystrom**, **Agnes Oliver**, **Margie Olson**, **Rusty Parent**, **Irma Pushnik**, **Gladys Rimmer**, **Rita Reich**, **Marion Seifert**, **Carmon Slayton**, **Jeannie Sleeter**, **Margaret Smith**, **Toni Scott**, **Betty Sharkey**, **Norma Wright** & **Yvette Zenner**...**Mrs. Eleanore (Nellie) Pelikan**, former European aerialist & mother of the late **Lillian Leitzel**, died May 26 in Milwaukee

**Nellie** claimed origination of the one-armed plange & could do the maneuver 32 times. Her daughter could do the stunt more than 200 times! **Nellie's** husband invented a revolving electrical trapeze that she used...**Dick Clemens**, erstwhile lion tamer, is now working 3 black bears since selling his cats on his jaunt to Japan.

From **Ringling Bros.**: **Mary Jane Miller** reports that when **Dick Anderson's** mother visited he took her to see the movie, "The Story of Three Loves," in which he had a part...**Prince Paul** had a big day when we played his hometown, Bangor, Maine...At Springfield, MA the **Mary Jane Miller Tent**, CFA, honored **Mary Jane** with dinner & a gift...**Jeanette (Mouse) Rix**, & **Felix Adler** celebrated birthdays...The big July 4th celebration was held in Hamilton, Ontario. **Duane Thorpe** introduced the emcee, **Emmett Kelly**, in classic European white clown make-up, dressed in spangles & sequins. Opening number was a fashion parade with **Elsie Jung** dressed as **Arky Scott**, on a horse. Following on elephants were **Toni Scott**, **Sally Marlowe**, **Evelyn Kent**, **Margaret Smith**, **Brenda Goring**, **Joyce Linares** & **Brenda Elliott**. **Toto** sang "Old Man River," & **DiDi** of the cookhouse sang, "Make Believe." **Bill Ballantine** did a take-off on **Vasconcellos**, assisted by **Roland** & **Maz Bokara**. After **Mr. Mistin, Sr.** played a flute solo, he introduced "Mr. Kistin, Jr."-**Otto Griebing** in short pants & blond wig. "**Deacon**" **Blanchfield** wore full ringmaster's outfit, including small black mustache, as **Count Nicholas**, while **Gene Lewis** & **George Barnaby** played town lovelies pestering him for autographs. **Maggie Smith** won the sack race; **Rinaldo** & **Marcia** won the 3-legged race and stake driving, **Toto** in 23 1/2 seconds.

Girls on the show had their annual rummage sale with items from 5 cents up...W.E. Lawson, Frank McClosky, Jack Burslem, Mark Johnson & Bill Reynolds caught 250 rainbow trout fishing in Utah...Sept. 19-Jimmy Crocker closed the season & returned to Sarasota & Jack Bray has joined...Tell Teigen fell during his high pole act during the Helena stand & is in the hospital...Freddie Freeman & Albert White are wondering when Bill Ballantine & Otto Greibling are going to quit saying "It's still coming" & deliver the contents of a certain package...In San Francisco, Bobbie Peck joined to visit husband, Bill McGough...At Portland, Dolly Copeland underwent an emergency appendectomy...Visitors included Betty & Gus Bell, Harry Dann, Andre, Norma, & Gilbert Fox, Lola Dobritch, Mayme Ward, Alberto, Jenny & Albetino Zoppe, Bea Konyot, Dennis Stevens, Nina Unus, Don Marcks & Roberta Ballantine...Tex Copeland had his day in Amarillo, TX, with many friends visiting & a write-up in the local paper about the local boy making good...Jimmy Crocker, Babs & Del Graham visited on their way to join Clyde Bros...

From Polack Eastern: Eddie Kohl, Skeeter & Mary Valentine did a 3-people flying act, because of Clayton Behee's injuries. Malikova is temporary replacement for the flying act...3-D pictures of Gene Randow & the Jack Joyce camels are now in packages of Muffets, put out by the Quaker Oats Co. Pete Ivanov is taking flying lessons under Curt Wilson's supervision...Jimmy Olson has a new dog... Miss Luxum closed in Mobile & returned to her home in Rochester, IN to start work on her new act, which she purchased from "Aida-The Girl in the Moon"...Billy Theron is called the Speed Demon since he tangled with State troopers in Mississippi...From Clyde Beatty, Eddie Dullum reports: Ernie Burch joined the alley in Oakland. At our big July 4th "Hidden Talent Revue" Tommy Hanneford emceed & numbers were presented by Ernie Burch, Milonga Cline, Skeeter Stath, Tiny Cuttin, Kay Hanneford & George Hanneford, Jr. Beattyette dancers included Rusty Sharples, Vicky Hanneford, Tiny Cuttin, Betty Escalante & Kay Hanneford. Euphrata, WA: this town is jinxed-in the past seasons we failed to play it due to a rail strike & a blow-down; this year a small twister struck during the Liberty Horse act. Mrs. Geo. Hanneford & Phil Escalante suffered minor injuries when the pad room fell. Mary Valentine Stath was severely injured in

the flying act while attempting a double somersault during matinee in Libby, Montana. The new hospital top arrived. Immediately, accidents besieged the show. Pablo Rodriquez, aerial bars, wrenched knee; Geo. Hanneford, Jr., trampoline, bruised back; Eddie Dullum, toe operation; Bob the Rigger, broken ribs; Elephant Ray, toe amputation; Whitey the usher, broken collarbone. Clowns Ernie Burch & Blinky Huffman celebrated their birthdays with a party in dressing room...Pvt. Billy Glen Valentine, formerly of the Flying LaVals & now stationed in Germany visited with Carl Sembach, & reports that Gustav Brumbach is related to Mrs. Fritz Huber of the Sensational Kays...From Tom Packs: The Zacchini flying act, with Ruth Flanagan, arrived 2 days after opening due to truck trouble en route...From Wallace & Clark Jo Ann Jennier reports: Joe Bourier joined with 3 big elephants. One of Walter Jennier's seals got out & he found it nosing around in a fish pail left beside the prop truck. Because of polio, children under 16 have been banned from performances. The Jennier's have added 4 pups, making 8 for them...From Cole Bros.: Eddie Murello purchased a new trampoline...From Bailey Bros.: Loretta LaPearl served Crab Louis to a group of friends after she went deep sea crabbing in Tillamuck...From Siebrand Bros.: Mrs. Clark, the Hodgins & Bob Emerico were caught in a snowstorm atop Pike's Peak & Harry & Herta Froebess went thru ghost towns & a gold mine on their camera expeditions...Henry Ringling North, VP of Ringling, was divorced by Elizabeth Palmar North...Francine Volante has quit her aerial act & joined Ira Watkins' chimp act...From Tom Packs: Indianapolis was triple tragedy day. First, Bill Scamihorn was bitten while cleaning the Hawthorn bear cages. Next, Arden Kreisch stepped on a piece of glass & had to be treated at the hospital. Finally, Tommy, smallest of the Pack's elephant herd, slipped in the ring & broke an ankle. He was left behind in a cast with Mary, an older bull, as the baby sitter. A rush call was made to Dr. Henderson in Sarasota to find the proper treatment. In Wheeling, Mr. Packs gave his annual party for the cast. Doing impromptu skits: The Wallendas imitated Prof. Keller; The Valentines took off on The Wallenda wire act & The Zacchins did an impersonation of the Lone Ranger...From Hunt Bros.: Marcia Hunt, and a show elephant, visited Old Bett's Memorial in Somers, NY. on the 150th anniversary of her arrival here.

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## **BACK YARD GOSSIP....**

Stephanie King is the new manager of the gift shops at Circus World Museum. She reports that they are now the exclusive source for the ERTL circus wagons. Contrary to previous reports, the collectible 1/4 inch scale, cast wagons have not been withdrawn from the market. BUT, the only place you can get them is from CWM! Also, the prices have been reduced. Pawnee Bill Bandwagon, Lion & Mirror Tab & the Twin Lions Telescoping Tab are now \$55. The Bostock & Wombwell's Menagerie Wagon is \$47. Shipping is \$5. for the 1st item & \$3. for each additional wagon. You can call the CWM Store at 608-356-8431 to order with credit cards, or write to them at 426 Water St., Baraboo, WI 53913. Release of the second set of wagons, including the Ringling Bell Wagon, has been delayed until Jan. 1999...The children's book, **Wright Vs. Wrong**, by Gigi Tegge can be purchased from the author for \$16.95 plus \$3. postage. The address is: P.O. Box 661, Baraboo, WI 53913...A sponsor of Culpepper in Rosemond, CA, absent-mindedly gave away 1300 coloring books that were to be sold on the show that day!..Due to extremely high winds, Culpepper's center pole was bent at a 90-degree angle during set-up on April 23 at Andrews AFB, CA. The day's date was postponed until May 13, but the Air Force repaired the pole & the shows went on as usual the next day!

From the Albuquerque newspaper: "ANIMAL KINGDOM: A Texas circus employee who was on the road when he brought a trailer of animals to Albuquerque last summer was found guilty of 10 counts of improper care and maintenance of the critters and one count of interfering with police. The case stemmed from the discovery of a dead elephant, two other pachyderms and eight llamas inside the hot and cramped trailer. Ben Davenport of the King Royal Circus was found guilty by a Metropolitan Court judge, who will impose sentencing at a later date. All the crimes of which Davenport was convicted are misdemeanors. Davenport has claimed the elephant's death was an accident and that the other animals were being taken care of properly. But after

the animals were found in the trailer in an Albuquerque hotel parking lot, the city confiscated them and a lengthy court battle has been waged over their fate since then."...

Arkie Scott's widow, Cora 'Toni' Scott, passed away May 21 in Sarasota. She was born Jan. 27, 1930 in Huntington, WV, and moved to Sarasota 37 years ago from Thousand Oaks, CA. A retired circus performer, she had worked for the Ringling Bros. Circus for several years and for Columbia Studios of Thousand Oaks from 1955 to 1968. She was a member of Showfolks of Sarasota, VFW, and the American Legion Auxiliary, all in Sarasota.

Survivors include two sons, Harry, of Birmingham, AL, and Eugene, of Sarasota. Memorial donations may be made to Showfolks of Sarasota, Inc., 5204 Lockwood Ridge Rd. N., Sarasota, FL 34234.

Thanks to Bobby Hakes for sending this information in. Toni was a neighbor of Bobby's and they both were on the Cole Show. With her husband, Arkie, they worked in Thousand Oaks for Goebels and for the studios for many years after he left the Ringling show.

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The Newsletter of the Joel E. Warner Tent has some interesting tidbits. Beyond the rumor stage, Ringling is coming out next year with a tenter. It is rumored that Sylvia Zerbini, her beautiful liberty horses & trapeze acts are signed, and that Cindy & Roy Wells (now on Kelly-Miller) are to have the elephant department. (Your editor will try to find out more information on this at the CFA Convention!)...R. J. Reynolds, the tobacco people, has used a picture of a Camel on the front of the package since they were a dime a pack. The picture was based on a photograph of a Barnum & Bailey camel, Old Joe. The shot was taken with the camel in an unusual pose, with its' nose & tail held high, because Old Joe's trainer had just hit him on the nose for misbehaving!...Detroit New: Letter to the Editor: "Lately, it is obvious that animals are being accorded more respect than some other members of the species. The only way I can justify this is to admit that animals don't smoke, drink alcohol, use drugs, shoot people, spend more than they earn, gossip or use profanity. And they are not racist, Democrats or Republicans!" By Stan Mazur.

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## **RUMBLINGS FROM THE CRUMMY**

### **BY BRIAN NUNN**

\*I'd been hired on a show that had a big elephant herd. Opening day, the boss told me to work the inside ride at intermission. I asked the assistant boss which elephant to take. He said to take Kate, and I asked how she was. He said, "Oh, she's fine; a cupcake!"

I thought, "great". So I get ready & put the howda on & off we go to be on time for intermission. Two elephants working & I put her into the platform. They load her up & off we go. I'm stayin' with her an it all seems cool. (I'd been around a few elephants before this!) We make our run & get to the back-door of center ring. I take a couple of steps back so she can come around. (Of course, I think she's not a problem bull!) Well, while she's comin' around, she takes a shot at the ringmaster, knocks him sideways into ring #3! I'm a little angry, but more surprised. I get ahold of her, no problem and work the rest of intermission. With the ringmaster still doin' his pitch on the podium. I found him later & apologized. He said it was cool; things happen. But, I learned to not take people's word till I get to know them good. I found out later she liked to try & eat kids & sock people now and then! She was a sweet old elephant & would bring tears to my eyes with the heart she used working with me. Kate was one of my favorites.

I once said (when I was first hired on) "that elephants got a sourpuss expression." One of the old hands, Mark, told me, "If you stood next to Tusko all day, you'd be a sourpuss too." Tusko was a bully.

\*Here's one: The compulsive gamblers, betting on how long it takes the passive aggressives to make the over-eater to cry, sounds like a typical crummy atmosphere to me.

\*Steve Gossard, circus historian, and Evan Brown, a performer with the Gammi Phi Circus at Illinois State University, and I drove down to Jacksonville, IL last week for a dinner & meeting with the Byrd Family Tent. Hovey Burgess was the speaker. He has a doctorate or two involving circus's as a strong form of entertainment. He taught & graduated the likes of Lorenzo Pickle, Paul Binder (you might know of his association with The Big Apple Circus.) And no less than a number of dozens of people who have succeeded in the business. Hovey announced his retirement from formal education, and has been involved with Circus Flora since 1991. He let us all know that he is happy with being in a circus company, and enjoying the struggles

involved. His only sad note was the slow decline of the mud shows, but was enthusiastic about their ability to survive. David Balding & his wife, Laura, are consummate horse professionals, and David has a love of circus that can't be denied. He's surrounded himself with an admirable troupe of talent. If you get a chance to see this show, you will see of what I speak. They're all public and CFA friendly, so take some time to stop and visit.

\*The Great Winged Furry Critter Adventure, or Fearless Ferlin Saves The Day: Much to Cherie's and my surprise, one morning while she was taking the dogs out, a bat flew into her face from the basement. She squeaked; and I came to see what was going on. So, with the kitchen door closed, and the outside door propped open, I located the culprit and asked Cherie to go next door & get a fishing net. I used the broom handle & net and took 'em outside & let 'em loose in the tree. The poor little critter was in good health, shiny brown fur and a healthy set of wings. The poor bat was trying to be quiet and unthreatening as he could.

\*I was billing a town in Nebraska. I went into a bar to have a coffee & sandwich. They'd just opened & the woman cleaning the tables & setting the chairs announced, with no small alarm, there was a bat in the building. Since I had nothing else to do at the time, I got a broom stick & a tennis racket that the barmaid had & knocked the poor, little critter down, put him in a box & let him go outside. I got free beer & lunch for the rest of the day and didn't have to give up any comps.

\*As a kid, growing up in the Pacific Northwest, if you got lost in the woods or at sea in the fog, (you didn't need any high line equipment) all you needed was a small radio with a pull-out antenna. Sweep it around horizontally, where the broadcast signal is at its weakest is where it's broadcasting from. This made life simple; you could walk out into the woods and if lost, climb the highest mountain & look around, or use your radio. But, in the last 20 years or so, it's gotten to be so it's extremely dangerous to get off the beaten path. The place I grew up as a child is molested by bears. They raid the cabins & campsites on a routine basis. And so, while I'm at it, I've got to mention that there has been some killings of humans out jogging in the woods; close enough to their houses that you could hear the TV. Mountain lions love a running target. And God help you if you get caught shooting a mountain lion or a bear. I think that there is some problem with this. I'm annoyed to have to live with the fact I can't go out & play in the woods like I did as a kid. I think a good slogan for animal activist would be, "Kill Them With Kindness" whether it be the humans or the animals, you'd have to ask an activist.

## IF I OWNED A CIRCUS

Ah, yes...how many of us have said those words? Just about every single one, I'd guess! I have, many times, and each of those many times I would often start off with a new idea. Usually this fantasy starts when I think of winning the lottery, which just goes to prove a saying that the lottery is just for those who are very poor at math. If you were smart at math, you wouldn't think of playing it!

Well, if I ran a circus I'd find some way to bring back one of the best features ever-the circus band. Show owners seem to have reached a joint decision on cutting the nut by eliminating the band. This may be a great idea if you are looking solely at the profit and loss statement. If you look at the overall circus picture however, it seems to me that it is one of the last places you should cut overhead. For well over 100 years, the circus band has been one of the most universal attractions carried by even small shows. An example of their popularity arose ten or twelve years ago when the ill-fated Toby Tyler show carried a ten piece band led by Charles Schlarbaum. Circus goers who were interviewed *after* seeing the show repeated the same answer over and over when they were asked, "What did you like best about the show?" Many of them said the same thing, "That great circus band!" This wasn't meant by any of them as a negative remark about the show itself, for in spite of other troubles (talk about troubles!) the show carried some very good acts. My point is, a good circus band is so rare today that it is among the greatest attractions a show can carry!

OK, so bands cost a lot of bucks. Lets just make a guess at how much: For a ten piece band, you've got to pay at least \$550. a week per man with double to the leader. That makes the initial cost, \$6,050 per week. Then there is a big fee to ASCAP, the organization that collects royalties on all music for the persons who wrote that music. I have no idea how much that cost is, but lets say another \$1,000 or so. Then, there is the cost of meals and sleeping facilities. Lets add another \$20. per day per man for meals for all ten, plus a sleeper at \$750. per week. This all totals a little under

\$9,000. per week. Now, lets say that I have underestimated by ten or eleven percent and add another \$1000 for a grand total of \$10,000. a week. A whole bunch of bucks!

Suppose we hire a leader who can compose original music, thereby saving that \$1000. per week cost to ASCAP. We could pay the leader a little more for these services. Now, lets suppose that we go to a good music school or even a good high school or even a good high school for help. You know that the Circus Kingdom Band, which was produced by the late Reverend L. David Harris, was probably the best circus band in recent years, and is fondly remembered by fans. I don't know what the costs of the band were, but I know that the personnel were all college students who, I think, received college credit for the experience they received while with that band. Suppose you went to these schools and said, "We'll provide meals, sleeping quarters, and a small salary plus some of the greatest playing experience available, to these kids if you give them credits for, lets say, 60 days with our show. Then you go to the Musician's Union and tell them what you are going to do: you're going to produce a bunch of trained musicians with enough circus experience to make them good, income-earning musicians. I'll bet you could make it work. You would rotate musicians throughout the season (60 days each) and you could present a rock-'em, sock-'em circus band at a reasonable cost. The students would get a chance to play with a real circus band, under real conditions. The circus going public would hear something that hasn't been heard since the Beatty Show canceled their "real" band several years ago. The show would be upped by a lot of percentage points when that band backed the acts with a real *cue-catching drummer or two.*

One other thing; I'd make sure that the uniforms were cool, no matter how hot the tent or building. They weren't when I played with a circus band so many, many years ago.

(Submitted by Frank Thompson)

Ringling



Ethel Jennier - Russell Bros.

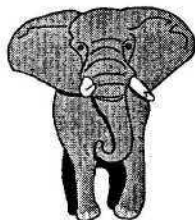


Art + Antoinette 5/30/30  
Concello

Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus 1938



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