



8th Year

October 1, 1979

Number 40

Bentley Doing OK

Bentley Bros. Circus, in its third year, is now firmly entrenched as one of America's fastest growing, top quality circuses. Tommy Bentley and Charles (Chuck) Clancy, who make up M. Charles Productions, are justified in pride of accomplishment. From its inception three years ago, little by little, step by step, the show has become more ambitious. As the performance enlarges so does the promotion and route. In an enterprise wherein promoters are also producers, and where front end and back end are handled personally, slow but steady growth is good judgement. Too many new shows, blinded by optimism, grow too quickly, are spread too thin. The team of Bentley/Clancy has shown admirable restraint.

"Eventually we plan twelve weeks in the spring, twelve weeks in the fall," executive director Tommy Bentley told CR. "We could easily do that many weeks now but for a lack of quality promoters."

Four new eastern cities have been signed to beef up the second half of the 1980 route, expected to start in mid-August; new towns are lined up for the California spring junket beginning in May. Promotions for all towns played this season increased over last year with the exception of Lawton, Okla., where a scandal erupted over an earlier promotion involving another show. When interviewed Bentley expressed the opinion that the date would not be a loss and that the town would not be dropped from the 1980 route.

Show was caught at Johnstown (Pa) Sept. 15-16. Attendance matched the previous year with an even heavier advance ticket sale. Johnstown was the only indoor date; all other towns were played open-air.

While it is difficult to make a circus look good outdoors, especially in the daytime, Bentley Bros. is an exception - enhanced by a preponderance of aerial riggings, masked by a 250 ft. red and white backwall, stretching left and right from a 24 x 24 red and white bandtop. Red and white ring

carpets center regulation red and white curbing, cornered by four quartz lights each. Lighting is augmented at night by six show-owned spots.

Show-owned equipment includes a semi (purchased from Circus Vargas and still bearing the Vargas colors), a novelty truck to which a red and white awning is attached, and a candy wagon. A 5th wheel office trailer will be added in 1980.

The Bentley Bros. Circus Report will be continued next week.

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... from Buck Young

This letter is in reference to the article in your paper "Circus Report" issued Sept. 17, 1979, No. 38, Page 4. The article is **HOTLINE** and concerns a totally untrue article about Corky Davis and I want a retraction of his article and the truth to be known to all readers of Circus Report.

Corky Davis, alias Jeff Davis, Ian McIntire, or The Fireman Clown, was referred to me in May of 1979 by a fellow established animal trainer named Dave Sabo. I was informed Corky was a professional cat trainer and would train my cats to do an act for Ghost Town Amusement Park in Moosic, Pa.

Within three weeks I discovered that not only was Corky Davis genuinely afraid of my tame cats, he would in no way ever go into the cage with one cat at a time let alone eight cats. He couldn't be trusted to feed and water the cats and lied to my customers that he was my partner.

I own 26 cats at this time, including African lions, black mane lions, Siberian tigers, Bengal tigers, spotted leopards, black leopards, jaguars, cougars and bobcats.

"Bingo" mentioned in the article as Corky Davis' tiger is my tiger and has always been mine since he was nine days old. He is not clawed and bitten by my Bingo at Ghost

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Town or at my compound. He never did any animal show at Ghost Town except working as "Happy the Clown" for one day.

He was fired by me in June and has since been a photographer in a mall free-lancing pictures of children, plus he is on welfare.

Corky Davis does not own any cats as was previously reported in a May issue of your paper. He never has and cannot ever own a cat legally because he is not a United States citizen. He is a Canadian citizen.

Please place a retraction that the information received by your office was incorrect and give your trusted customers the real truth so no one else hires him under his false qualifications.

You may use my name "Buck Young" or "Buck's Jungle Cats" or "Buck Young's Safari-Land" at Ghost Town.

Notice

If you have ordered items from advertisers in Circus Report and then have had problems obtaining those items be sure to contact your local Postal Inspector.

After that send us a copy of your letter to the advertising person, stating all of the facts. Also send along a copy of your cancelled check.

We will take these to the local Postal Inspectors office and get some action started from this end.

NAMES in the NEWS

JOHN MacKAY, clown, worked dates with the Dobritch Circus as well as with Bentley Bros. Circus this past month.

IRVIN ROMIG (Ricky the Singing Clown) worked convention parties in Detroit last month, and also was the M.C. for an M & M Show at River Rouge. He is currently teaching a class on clowning at Michigan's Oakland Community College.

VALENTINO, high wire performer, is currently featured with the Teatro Caopolican show in Santiago, Chile.

ROBERT D. CLINE, former elephant man on Kelly-Miller and King Bros. would enjoy hearing from friends. Write him at: Rte. 18, Box 97, Albany, Ga. 31701.

BOB STODDARD has designed new stationary for the Texas Mid-Cities Clown Alley. The group will hold its second annual Clown Day at the Texas State Fair on Oct. 6th.

THE CIRCUS REPORT is compiled and edited by Don Marcks, 525 Oak St., El Cerrito, Calif. 94530 - Phone: 415 - 525 - 3332.

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Show Dates

Carden-Johnson Circus
Oct. 4-7 Corpus Christi, Tex

Carson & Barnes Circus
Oct. 1 Richmond, Ky.
2 Radcliff
3 Louisville
4 Hartford
5 Russellville
6 Princeton

Circus Vargas
Oct. 1-4 Baton Rouge, La.
6-11 Decatur, Ga.

Gil Gray Circus
Oct. 5-21 Dallas, Texas

Great American Circus
Oct. 1 Dickson, Tenn.
2 Lewisburg
3 Fayetteville

Happytime Circus
Oct. 2-7 Ventura, Calif.

Hoxie Bros. Circus
Oct. 1 Valdosta, Ga.
2 Tallahassee, Fla.
3 Panama City
4 Niceville
5-6 Pensacola
7 Milton

Ringling-Barnum - Blue Unit
Oct. 2-7 Indianapolis, Ind.

Ringling-Barnum - Red Unit
Oct. 4-14 Denver, Colo.

Royal Lichtenstein Circus
Oct. 1 Omaha, Nebr.
2 Fremont
3 Ottawa, Kans.
4 Manhattan
5 Lawrence
6-7 Kansas City, Mo.

TNT & Royal Olympic Circus
Oct. 2-4 Cedar Falls, Iowa

Texas Shrine Circus
Oct. 4-14 Houston, Texas

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---- MAGIC ----

Tom Ogden, Magician
Oct. 1-2 Atlanta, Ga.
4-6 Loch Sheldrake, NY

Reams, the Magician
Oct. 2-6 Montgomery, Ala.

Tannen's Magic Jubilee
Oct. 5-7 Loch Sheldrake, NY

Voorheis Magic Circus
Oct. 2 Carrollton, Mich.

---- OTHER DATES ----

Century 21 Shows - Blue Unit
Oct. 1-6 Troy, Ala.

Century 21 Shows - Red Unit
Oct. 1-6 Laurel, Miss.

Clown Day
Oct. 6 Dallas, Texas

Disco Fever
Oct. 4-5 Tampa, Fla.
6 Lakeland

James H. Drew Exposition
Oct. 1-6 Cartersville, Ga.

The Flintstones
Oct. 2 Atlanta, Ga.

Great Danbury Fair
to Oct. 8 Danbury, Conn.

Gutis Family - Comedy Act
Oct. 1-8 Danbury, Conn.

Ice Capades - Cont'l Unit
Oct. 3-7 Great Falls, Mont.

Ice Capades - Eastern Unit
Oct. 3-7 New Haven, Conn.

Ice Capades - Western Unit
to Oct. 7 Tulsa, Okla.

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Lipko's Comedy Chimps
Oct. 1-8 Danbury, Conn.

Los Latinos - Wire Act
Oct. 5-21 Dallas, Texas

Murphy Bros. Exposition
to Oct. 7 Tulsa, Okla.

Royal American Shows
Oct. 5-14 Jackson, Miss.

Frank Strout's Animals
Oct. 7 Angola, La.

Tip Top Shows - Blue Unit
to Oct. 4 La Crosse, Wsc.

Tip Top Shows - Green Unit
to Oct. 4 La Crosse, Wsc.





MY EARLIER REPORT that the Beatty-Cole show may go on rails is no idle gossip. More and more I am receiving reports indicating this is actually the case. With only two moves a week it certainly is feasible just as it's feasible to conclude that gasoline will go to much HIGHER prices by mid-summer of 1980. The Beatty show was on rails for years and there are many people connected with the tent who are knowledgeable in this area. So, don't be surprised if the first major railroad show (under canvas) emerges as a reality very, very soon! And for the Doubting Thomases let me remind you that Ringling-Barnum is STILL on rails!

A MAJOR showman connected with the Beatty-Cole operation and who left is slated to return in an executive capacity. I won't name "names" but anybody in the know can figure out the man's identity.

CLOSEUPS: 69 yr. old CFAR JOHN L. SULLIVAN went back to college, after he retired and got his A.B. degree last May. He majored in literature and english all of which proves a man is never too old to learn - too bad some of our younger people in the business don't take the hint . . . ELFIE KLEMENTI visited the beautiful home of WES and LONNIE (formerly with Vargas) enroute to a date at Lake Tahoe. Elfie says Wes and Lonnie were VERY surprised to see the Klementis. Elfie remarks that I managed to make my second appearance on the TV show CIRCUS on her birthday and wants to know how I managed it - I'm just an old celebrator from way back, Elfie! . . . An unconfirmed report comes to me that the VILLAMS are now doing the act with their daughter, that their partner is no longer with them. . . ELLIOTT ABELS, Ian Garden's partner, means that he has not been getting all the fancy work done on his stunning Oakville (Ont) residence - too busy! Wife SHIRLEY even had to work in the

office several months this summer! . . . JOHN McCONNELL is getting closer to publication of the Hanneford bio and hopes to have it out to coincide with the Detroit Shrine date next March. As slow as publishers are that will almost be a miracle. . . Understand that TABAC has bought a duplex - four units, all rented out . . . JENNY WALLEDA reports that CARLA WALLEDA is doing well with her show and that the name of Jenny's new Western Band is MATOKA. . . LARRY KENT spent ten days trouping with the Hoxie show and remarks the current edition of the show is the "strongest" he's seen in years . . . WALT STIMAX has a clown alley of five . . . and DUTCH CRAWFORD is working the five babies in a fast-paced routine. . . JANE MINNICK has the "pie car" (it's been years since I heard that phrase) . . . In Ann Arbor WAYNE FRANZEN and his wife visited. . . The band leader is JACK JACKSON fronting a trio and much standard circus music is used. . . One of Walt and Millie's chimps escaped as the act was exiting Cat trainer MIKE CECERE called to the chimp which went to him, jumping into his arms, but suddenly some body else ran up and scared the animal causing Mike to be bitten severely on the left side of his face. Narrowly missing an eye. Larry says he doubts the bite will leave a scar. . . Biz was good on the show's swing through Michigan.

APPARENTLY the injunction the Ringling show got which allowed WALLY NAGHTIN, Jr. to continue working in the bear act was good only through Labor Day. Haven't heard at this writing as to the outcome of this brouhaha.

SNAPSHOTS: BILL HALL (of Bauer-Hall) reports they've had one of their best years and that their European bookings are mushrooming. . . CO CO and Company worked the Michigan State Fair. . . BILL

BRICKLE and HANS (of Adele and Gory) visited Dobritch Int'l at Wayne - they were doing a Labor Day celebration nearby for GRACE McINTOSH. . . IONE STEVENS and DONNY McINTOSH were seen wheeling about the Michigan State Fair in their "golf-cart" - they had several concession stands on the midway and Donny told me they have had a good season and no problem with gas, but they plan to consolidate their route in 1980. The cost of fuel is forcing the decision (they won't be alone) . . . JIMMY DOUGLASS went to Lincoln from Detroit to pick up an organ he has in storage. Enroute he planned to visit the VAN VOORDENS in Highland (Ill). Freddie works at a major organ company and if Jimmy stopped he is probably still there.

THE GREAT SALLY RAND died in early September of a heart attack. She was 75. Sally worked up until just before her death, looking wonderful (half her age), full of spirit and zest. She was a delightful woman with a marvelous sense of humor, well-known and well-loved by circus people, many of whom were her close friends. Sally knew what it was like to troupe the lots and she never put on airs. Other than GYPSY ROSE LEE no other "exotic" dance star ever reached her stature. She was an original. Rest in Peace.

MY TURNING to mystery writing was inspired by the late great AGATHA CHRISTIE whose books I miss. No other writer ever matched Dame Agatha for cleverness of plot and simplistic writing style. My subsequent involvement with the genre naturally turned on my friends to Christie - at least those who hadn't read her. Among the new addicts are FRED VAN VOORDEN and SANDY DOBRITCH, along with a raft of others. For those of you who haven't been tuned in to the Mistress of Mystery all sixty-five of her novels

(Continued on Page 14)

REPORT

... by Allen Babcock

FISHER BROS. CIRCUS

On April 4th, I drove to Mt. Pulaski (Ill) to visit the Fisher Bros. Circus. It was a beautiful day and the local school teachers brought out a large number of children to see us set up the tent and seats. There hadn't been a circus in this town for 26 yrs so the people were really excited.

There was a good advance sale so we put up three-fourths of the seats for the matinee. A large number of folks waited until that night to buy tickets and so we had to set up the rest of the seats and even then people were sitting on the grass down to the ring curbs.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the show and many stopped to thank the show folks for coming to their town.

The program consisted of: Freddie White, single traps; Peanut Pitch; B. K. Silverlake, goats/l lama; Mel Silverlake, liberty ponies; Mel Ray and

Harley, clowns; Dick Lunsford, military ponies; Clowns; Teak Corbett, the drunk elephant; Dick Lunsford, trick and fancy rope spinning; Mel with Rusty, the educated pony; Mel Ray in a race with the flying saucer; High Dive Dog; Intermission; Freddie White, anchor perch; Clowns; Mel and Mel Ray, sports and past-times of the old west; Midway announcement; Teak Corbett with elephant.

Bob Greene was the announcer. Booking Agents were Myrna Ratcliff, Gino Hooper, Terry Fenne,; Billposter, Jeannie Hooper; Supt., Teak Corbett; Mechanic, Pat Silverlake; Concessions, Jim Kernan.

HOXIE BROS. CIRCUS

On Sept. 7th, Hoxie Bros. Circus played Danville, Ill. They had a long 200 mile jump into town and so were late getting in. Since it was such a beautiful day and they were late it was decided that the show would be presented in the open.

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some good reports on this show in CR, like the Sept. 17th issue.

Visitors on the lot were: Merle Pepper and family, Bob Phebus, Jack and Cliff Albea, John Osborn, Gersh and Edith Johnston, Tom Parkinson and Al Gragalunis.

NAMES in the NEWS

MARVIN VARNER was given a red-wood coffee table by his brother during the American Continental Circus tour in Oregon.

CLARENCE NASH, the voice of Donald Duck for the past 45 years, has done the duck's voice in 128 films.

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Although Christmas still seems like a long ways off, it really isn't.

Why not plan your Christmas Greeting ad for Circus Report now and thus avoid the last minute rush. Each year some people are disappointed because they waited so long, so don't delay, act now!

Regular advertising prices will prevail for the coming special issue. Yes, color will be available, if you want, at just \$10.00 extra for each color.



ROYAL HANNEFORD CIRCUS

The Royal Hanneford Circus played in the Coliseum Building at the Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, Mass., July 12-16,

The entire circus had to be torn down each week-day night (like a one nighter) to permit a morning horse show and/or animal judging in the building which was built in 1921. Then, the entire circus was set-up again each day after the various fair events had been concluded.

Classified

For those who are interested we can offer a complete "Classified Section" in Circus Report. The cost would be 5c per word, including address and phone numbers.

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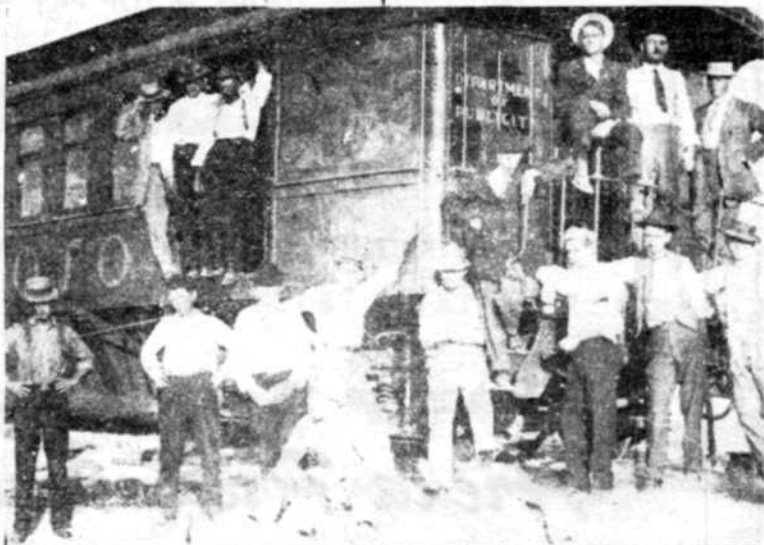
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The program, running about an hour and 15 minutes featured: Come-in, clown paper act by Hal Haviland; an 11 piece band directed by Bob and Kay Parker; Phil Morris, announcer; Al Leonard, vocalist; Julie Ventura, slide for life; Struppi Hanneford and her tigers; The Venturas, aerial cradle and cloud swing; The Franciscos, teeterboard act; Clown Laundry gag by

Wally and Cheryl Jones; The Hanneford Troupe, riding act; Gerard Soules, Parisian Poodle Act; The Cinderella spec; The Gaonas, flying act; The Hanneford Elephants; Display with Steve Shumaker, chimp, Gerard Soules, plate spinning and the Great Sladek, balancing; Mark Karoly with the Hanneford Space Cannon.



Pictured above is the crew of the Sells Floto Advertising Car No. 1, for the season of 1909. On the ground (l.t.r.) are: Al Hall, boss billposter; William Funk; Leo Faber; Mike Conners, car manager; Pearl Bryan; Pete Mitchell and Fred McKeen. Ed McKeen is seated in front with his dog.

On the steps and platform are: Mr. Kettlean, Paul Barnes and Rolla Jones. Standing in the side door of the car are: Bill Lynch and "Pop" Bell.

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SPECIAL**CIRCUS DONATION**

..... by Velma Lowry

The mechanized model of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, formerly owned by Joseph Miller, has been presented to the Roswell Park Memorial Cancer Institute at Buffalo, N.Y. It will be remembered that Joseph F. Miller passed away in August, while living in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

The circus was placed in the children's section of the facility, for the enjoyment of the youngsters hospitalized there.

For the past 15 years the model circus was billed as "The Biggest Little Show On Earth" and the Millers toured the country with it. They reportedly found the model show and bought it for \$2,500 back about 1965 when they first moved to Tarpon Springs, where they retired due to ill health. After many months of work they restored the mechanical circus to its original attractiveness. Both Mr. and Mrs. Miller had been

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patients at one time or another at the hospital facility. Mrs. Miller was first hospitalized 44 years ago.

It was the Millers' way of saying "Thank You" for the services they received at the hospital.

PEOPLE

REV. AUSTIN MILES has signed to serve as ringmaster for George Hubler dates in 1980. He will also be working other show dates as well.

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NAMES in the NEWS

JOHN and RUTH OWEN have returned to their home in Florida after a tour with Circus Girard. Ruth's mother spent five weeks with them and became a great grandmother for the third time on Aug. 7th, when Ruth's daughter, Sandra Haines, had a baby girl.

JANIE ZAMPERLA and GEORGE CORONAS announced their engagement during the run of the New York State Fair. Both Coronas and the Zamperla family will be working the Texas Shrine dates.

CHARLES ROARK, who has worked with BOB SNOWDEN for 18 years, has moved to Malvern, Ark., where

he plans to be semi-retired.

ADEN W. LOWRY, of Sedan, Kans., won the Grand Champion Sweep Stakes Award at the Chautauqua Fair for his Collector's Doll House. His daughter LOYETTE won the same award on the furnishing of her Doll House. Aden just finished building a barn that will go to his grandson DONALD RAY BURDEN, of Los Angeles, Calif.

HENRY B. (the former Great Valleau) is attending the convention of "L'Association Francaise des Artistes Prestidigitateurs" at Dijon, France. He is accompanied by his daughter LAURA MICHELLE. After the convention they will visit magic dealers in both Paris and France, as Henry seeks out information for his coming book "The

Circus Magician."

MILONGA CLINE visited DAVID and MARJORIE HACKETT over the Labor Day weekend. She reports that DAVISIO CRISTIANI was there too.

ELAINE and ROBERT LUND, of the American Museum of Magic, at Marshall, Mich., have received an Award of Merit from the Historical Society of Michigan.

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Acts

Acts appearing with the fall tour of the Bentley Bros. Circus are:

George Barreda, lions; Display with table balancing by the Winns, sword balancing by Klaus and hand balancing by the Dionnes; Clowns with Giraffe gag; Los Latinos, wire; Display with M. Zerbini, Vasquez and Wini McKay on trapeze; Carmen Hall and her Baboons; The Dionnes, perch act; Clowns playing Baseball; Acrobats by the Zerbini; Display with horses presented by the Smahas; the Vasquez Troupe on flying trapeze; Gorilla Parody (Klaus); The Zerbini Riding act; Great Huberto, slide for life; Clowns and the Safe; Juggling display with The Dionnes, Chester Cable and the Zerbini; Joselito on the high wire; Ben DeWayne and the Kaye Hollywood Elephants; The Winn Troupe, aerial motorcycle.

Tommy Bentley was the producer and ringmaster; Chuck Clancy is co-producer and concessions; Chester Cable handled props; John MacKay



CIRCUS GIRARD

... by Carl Conley

Girard Soules and I opened Circus Girard on June 11th for a 12 week season. We put in the full season, showing towns in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan.

The show made it up and down and over the road ok, but like most shows we had some open time.

Like most shows we had help problems. Workingmen went from 8 to 3 and inbetween. One of my clowns left without notice, as did the concession man. I also had people that didn't want to move. They wanted to stay at a K.O.A. or motel until show time. But still they put in the season.

At the end of the season Mr. Soules sold his part of the equipment. I've kept my part of the show and will buy a tent, seats and lights so I can go on the road in 1980. The show will then be called Williams Bros., and will open about the last of April in Ohio.

was electrician; Virginia Lee Fenton, organist; Chuck Gomes, drummer, with Clown Alley consisting of John MacKay, David Chabira and Bruce Warner.

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BILLY BARTON (Continued)

are still in print and selling like hot-cakes. For the tyro-reader I recommend THE ABC MURDERS, FUNERALS ARE FATAL, AND THEN THERE WERE NONE, THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD, DEATH ON THE NILE, EASY TO KILL, and last but not least her very first book published in 1920 but just as fresh today as tomorrow's news: THE MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR AT STYLES. Make a happy discovery, mystery fans!

SEE you down the road, luvs.

Mailroom

The Post Office has returned copies of Circus Report addressed to the following people. They say they can no longer deliver the mail as addressed.

Doris Lamothe	Fred Kitchen
Jay Wade	Tina M. Storey
Roger Goodwin	Nemo Enterprises
A. W. Constantini	Charles Jones

REPORT

BACK ON THE ROAD

After being heralded as "the missing circus" for most of last month, Circus Genoa was reportedly back on the road by late September.

News services carried stories across the country, about the "missing circus" which did not show as scheduled at Flandreau, S. D., Cherokee and Audubon, Iowa. Later the circus was located laying-off near Vermillion, S. D.

The news services report the circus has been faced with many problems including a tent blow down at New Ulm, Minn. They also cited difficulties with advance agents, as well as the rising cost of supplies and general every day operations.

Donors

Bill Ballantine, artist, author and long-time Dean of Clown College, has given an original drawing of Clyde Beatty to Dave Price for his planned Clyde Beatty Museum.

Price, a former circus billposter, said that with the addition of this portrait, drawn from life in 1957, the collection now includes original art on Beatty by the three great modern circus artists: Ballantine, Roland Butler, and Forrest Freeland.

Bainbridge, Ohio, Beatty's birthplace, has been selected as the site for the museum. Arrangements have been underway for over a year and plans are to open the attraction in 1980. In the meantime, the Bainbridge Historical Society is scheduled to erect

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SPECIAL

WEEKLY PAPER QUILTS

In a front page letter to its readers the new "Midway" weekly announced last month that it was suspending publication.

Officials of the paper cited inflation and rising costs, a lack of genuine interest and problems with the Post Office as reasons for having to discontinue its publication.

Midway's first issue appeared on May 7, 1979, and in all the paper was published for a total of 18 weeks.

markers at each end of Main Street identifying the town as the birthplace of the great wild animal trainer.

The Price collection, begun in 1953, is generally recognized as being the most complete collection of Beattyana in existence.

Other recent donors include Joe Heiser, Ron Richards, and Bob and Sandi Sabia.

Correction

An error appeared in the Aug. 27th announcement of the engagement and coming marriage of Naomi Petersen and show producer Charles Germaine.

Naomi's parents have a ranch in Southern Oregon, where they raise cattle and wheat.

NAMES in the NEWS

FRANK HANNON (Ho Po the Maine Clown) worked the Cumberland, Me. Fair on Sept. 24-29.

JACK and SANDRA FULBRIGHT recently purchased two Andalusia stallions from the famous Garrison Ranch in California. Jack flew to the coast to finalize the purchase and while in California visited with JOAN and CHET JUSZYK.

The Man Who Tried 19,000 TIMES



Hard Work Is the Big Trick in the Circus Trade

An Article by
FRANKLIN FARGO

THE greatest tragedy of the circus performer's life is that, while most persons enjoy the circus, very few indeed really understand and appreciate it.

The performer tries to make his act graceful, suave; to give it what he calls "the class." "The class" requires him to perform the most difficult feats with the minimum of apparent endeavor. It imparts finish to his act. It is his technique.

The circus management encourages him, for "the class" is the ambition of the circus as a whole. But both showmen and performers have been somewhat amazed to discover, as time goes on, that "the class" is not entirely an asset. And for an interesting reason:

A circus performance moves quickly. The most costly acts seldom fill more than seven or eight minutes. Thus the audience has no



Ernest Clarke, of the famous Clarke trapeze team.

opportunity to scrutinize carefully what the performers do, or to reflect upon the often amazing degree of effort involved.

It follows that acts which have the most "class" are frequently mistaken for acts which are the least difficult, because the performers go through them adroitly, gracefully, and seemingly without any great exertion.

This is unfortunate, not only from the per-



Charles Clarke, the other member of the team.

formers' standpoint, but from the standpoint of the public as well, because the circus, like almost everything else, becomes increasingly enjoyable the more one knows about it.

Take, for instance, the case of Ernest and Charles Clarke. The Clarkes are brothers, considered by many showmen the greatest high-trapeze performers in the world. Their great-great-grandfather was a circus performer, so they were "born to the ring." Ernest is now forty-two years old; his brother is eighteen months younger; and they have been practicing ever since they can remember.

"Among our principal tricks is the double somersault and pirouette," Ernest told me one

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

[THE MAN WHO TRIED 9,000 TIMES]

evening, as we sat on the tongue of a property wagon and watched the crowd file into the Big Top. "We attempted to accomplish it six times daily for two years—or 3,600 times (Sundays and the principal holidays are excluded from our working schedule)—before we did it at all. Then it was exceedingly crude and imperfect in form; it had, in other words, no 'class.'

"So we rehearsed it six times daily for three years more—or a total of 9,000 times—before we exhibited it to the public. Yet in our regular performance its essential parts fill just one-half second, while, including all preliminary motions and gestures, it is completed usually in less than half a minute.

"The trick consists of myself, the leaper, swinging off my platform, high in the top of the tent, with hands gripped on a bar that hangs at the end of two ropes. In midair, I hurtle myself into two somersaults, and, as the latter one is finished, revolve in a pirouette.

"Meanwhile, my brother Charles, the catcher, swinging from his bar on the opposite side of the trapeze, times his movements so that his hands, which are hanging downward, grip mine just as I start to fall.

"THE individual parts of the trick are not difficult for a circus performer; but to synchronize the several elements of the climax perfectly in the short span of half a second is quite difficult.

"Two or three others of our tricks were as difficult to master and are as quickly gone through. We attempted a feat known as 'two pirouettes in the hands' for three years—or more than 5,000 times—and were entirely unsuccessful. So we abandoned it as impossible. After another year, however, we returned to it and perfected it in about 1,800 additional trials and rehearsals.

"Two-fifths of a second is required to accomplish the essentials of that feat, which, including its preliminaries, occupies hardly a minute.

"We start from the same posi-

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REPORT**THE SIKORSKYS**

In addition to performing at various fairs, and doing spot dates with stage shows and circuses again this year, the Sikorskys now operate under the umbrella of their own corporation, TAL World-Wide Productions, Inc., and have been filling their last remaining dates with school and shopping mall dates as well as handling school teaching assignments.

tions as in performing the double somersault and pirouette. I leap from my bar and catch my brother's hands. Charles, of course, is hanging head downward.

"We make a complete swing (about forty-five degrees of a circle) with our hands locked together. When we reach the maximum elevation on our return trip through the air, and are over the center of the net, Charles releases his grip. I perform two pirouettes and catch my brother's hands again, before gravity and the pendulum-like movement of his bar carry him out of reach.

"I have to be quick in the pirouettes, because if I fall more than about eighteen inches before rejoining my brother, the trick fails.

"The three somersaults"—the last of the trio of principal tricks we happen to be using this season

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

As part of their wholesale activities of mass-produced juggling equipment to sporting goods, magic, and toy stores, they have been busy booking store and shopping mall promotions. They also teach phys-ed classes. All these activities are designed to improve and enlarge the market for juggling equipment, 'Juggle Bug' juggling equipment that is, to increase income as they charge the schools the same or almost the same prices for teaching as they do their acts.

As representatives of Juggle Bug, Inc., in the Washington area, the Sikorskys who normally field a juggling, unicycle and rolling globe act, have exclusive representation for the company in the mid-Atlantic states.

Their dealerships have been increasing and sales have also been picking up since their recent start. They are also the exclusive distributors of the only Diablo on the market today on a wholesale basis. This one, the same as used by the Chinese acrobats, is made of bamboo, and whistles, when sufficient speed is attained. Interest in this yo-yo . . . top-like device has created much interest amongst the children, as well as stores which wish to carry it.

In addition to producing some circuses and stage shows, they have been quite active with the shopping mall business and are also actively seeking

(Continued on Page 19)

—is similar to the double somersault and pirouette, except that a somersault replaces the pirouette.

"We have been exhibiting this trick for about twelve years. It was brought out of rehearsal about three years after the double somersault and pirouette, and it required only about two years to perfect, because a great deal of the preliminary work had been done.

"Yet in all the twelve years of its public exhibition we have performed it only 900 times more than its two-year rehearsal called for.

"We have mastered a total of twenty tricks, all of which are timed differently. That is, each of them requires me to go to a slightly different elevation before I leave my bar, and Charles to seize me out of the air at a little different juncture.

"Our act, however, is seldom the same. We follow no routine. I do whatever I please. And the funny thing is that I never have to let my brother know what I'm going to do. We have no signals; we seem to have a sort of mental telepathy. I suppose it's because we have gone over and over the same things so many times we understand each other instinctively. A circus man knows what that means—all the work that's behind it. But the public doesn't.

"Sometimes I think it's better not to have an act too well finished, because it's unquestionably a fact that the more you perfect a really difficult act, the easier it seems. And the public's inclination is to take matters at their face value.

"Look at the rosin-back horse—the horse on which the equestrians perform. His stuff looks simple—just to trot around and around the ring. But he is probably the most highly trained animal in the show. Before he can be used, he has to be taught to make the circuit of the ring always in a certain number of strides; fourteen to sixteen is the average in a forty-two-foot circle. "His gait must never vary. He

must never falter or stop, no matter what happens. If he does, the equestrian, who as likely as not is turning a somersault on his back, will suffer a fall that may easily be fatal. Yet I'll venture that not more than one person in 50,000 who comes to the circus thinks of the rosin-back as a trained animal. Most of them never think of him at all.

"Europe has produced most of the great circus performers because there the facilities for training have always been better. In every town of any size there is a municipal hippodrome, where



Showing the Clarke Brothers' grip. The wrappings prevent slipping.

one circus will play for as long as six weeks, changing its performance frequently.

"The apparatus, of course, is kept in place, so that the performers can use it in the mornings. And they have an opportunity to train their children.

"THE American circus, on the other hand, is always on the move. The apparatus is seldom in place before the afternoon performance is virtually ready to begin, and the performers can use it for their own purposes only an hour or so a day—that is, between the afternoon and the night shows."

Neither Ernest nor Charles Clarke has ever been seriously injured in following their hazardous calling—hazardous because it is quite as easy to be killed by a fall into the net, which all trapeze artists use to protect them, as it

is to be killed by another kind of a fall.

"I think we have our father to thank for that," Ernest said. "He was a kind but severe man. We never were permitted to try any new trick until we had learned all of its preliminaries to his complete satisfaction. The first thing he taught us was how to fall properly.

"You should fall feet downward, but, at the moment of striking, elevate the feet so as to strike on the back. If that is impossible, you should gather yourself as nearly as possible into a ball, but hold all the muscles loosely. I saw a Japanese killed in Paris not long ago, merely because he failed to ground himself thoroughly in that particular. The fellow missed his catcher's hands, spread-eagled, and broke his neck.

"My father's system was to attempt to learn only a limited number of tricks—say four or five—at one time. We were not permitted to try any trick more than six times in a day. After we had finished that part of our work, we did something else—bending, gymnastics, equestrianism, or juggling; for abroad (we were brought up in England) a circus performer must have more strings to his bow than one.

"A bender is a contortionist, and bending, like gymnastics, juggling, and equestrian work, is valuable on the trapeze. Equestrian work imparts an idea of speed and distance. Juggling quickens the eye—helps a performer to learn to think and act in the shortest possible time. Bending makes the body supple and graceful, while gymnastics, of course, is the very backbone of the business.

"Care is a trapeze performer's life insurance. The net and other apparatus must be inspected daily, and renewed as it gets old. Either Charles or I usually attend to that. We also weave our nets, or have them woven for us by other trapeze performers. The process, in the odd moments that are to be found around a circus, will sometimes require the better part of a season."

THE END

MAINE

... From TONY GREINER

The Blue Unit of the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus performed in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on Sept. 1 as part of a four day stand in that city.

Like any Ringling production, it was filled with quality acts, but again, like most Ringling productions, it left a feeling of disappointment in the viewer.

The acts, generally speaking, are spectacular, overflowing with skill, talent, and flair, often staggering in their virtuosity. Charly Baumann and company can be credited with being one of the finest assemblages of talent around.

The problem with the show is two-fold. Firstly, the production numbers are atrocious. They are overlong and pretentious in their efforts to bedazzle the spectator. The showgirls, floats and elephants all arrive in predictable fashion, and the end result is a lifeless tableau that is indistinguishable from

the one that came before it and the one that follows. The show could easily be better if these displays were simply hacked out in their entirety and the acts were allowed to come on without undue interruption.

The second problem lies in the show's music. The assemblage of musicians at Cedar Rapids was a fine one indeed, but Bill Pruyn's arrangements of popular melodies are anything but suited to provide the proper background for a circus performance.

Although popular tunes are fine for some acts, one finds oneself outwardly impressed of the performance given by Woodcock's elephants, but wistfully remembering a less spectacular act seen on a mudder that proved to be the more enjoyable due to its background of traditional music.

All in all this circus proved to be less satisfying than a good mudshow and solely because of the non-circus music elements that have been imposed upon it.

If only they could see the wisdom of

THE SIKORSKYS (Continued)

campgrounds work, as well as the entire production of the monthly publication, *The Calliope*, for Clowns of America, Inc. Additional services offered by the boys are PR brochures, artwork for ads and PR material, and business management services.

Appearances these past few months included a stint at Canobie Lake Park in Salem, N. H., the Blue Hill, Maine Fair, a Veteran's show in Milwaukee, some Shrine Circus dates, as well as many private picnics and stage shows.

They are planning to tour for one month in November and December with the Southeastern Entertainment Corp., Jar Ray Productions. This tour will start in Florida and extend into most of the Southeastern States and return.

returning to the traditional circus roots of their extravaganzas, then they might, indeed, have the greatest show on earth.

PLEASE NOTE: To All Concerned

Col. E. T. Bale

DOES NOT HAVE CANCER. His hospitalization was caused by his returning to work too soon after an operation.

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