

# CIRCUS REPORT

"AMERICA'S FAVORITE CIRCUS WEEKLY"

The logo for 'Circus Report' is a vibrant, stylized graphic. The title 'CIRCUS REPORT' is written in large, bubbly, red letters with a white outline, set against a blue background. Below the title is a smiling clown's face. To the left is a blue elephant and to the right is a roaring tiger, both in circular frames. A red and white striped banner at the bottom contains the text 'AMERICA'S FAVORITE CIRCUS WEEKLY'.

9th Year

March 3, 1980

Number 9



# Joseph C. Reisinger

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## REVIEW

THEATRE OF ILLUSION... by Allyn Peters

Magic is not dead! This was in evidence on Jan. 12th, in two shows sponsored by the Big Brothers and Big Sisters Organization of Jackson, Miss. The shows were used as a fund raising project for the organizations.

The show started, after a brief introduction by one of the sponsors, with the audience being told they were going to be taken back in time to relive moments in the performances of famous magicians of the past. First was Madame Herrman's Sword Box presented by Phyllis Berry, as Madame Herrman, assisted by George Ann McCullough and James Rimmer. This was followed by the Great Blackstone, portrayed by Chris Berry and assisted by Laura Murray, doing a very fast paced Zig Zag Illusion. Last, and certainly not the least, was the Great Houdini's Metamorphosis or Substitution Trunk, presented by Peter Sturgis and June Berry, assisted by Melinda Madden.

The audience was then taken to a dressing room on one side of the stage, where the star of the show, Marko the Magnificent, was seated. Marko is Richard L. Berry, of Clinton, Miss., who was once an understudy and assistant to the Great Harry Blackstone, Sr. Marko, who has never lost his love for magic, tells the audience that he is going to take them on a magical "journey" in time to recreate the full evening magic and illusion shows of yesteryear, even using some of the masters original illusions.

With that the beautiful Suzanne Ramsey favored the audience with a spirited vocal version of the

(Continued on Page 22)

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Nostalgia and circus buffs will like "The Great Circus Street Parade" in pictures by Charles Fox and F. Beverly Kelley.

This book has 183 rare photos, mostly black-and-white, with nearly a dozen in color. The book is 8½ x 9½ with 127 pages of text and illustrations

It is arranged in the sections usually seen in a street parade. It opens with the Bandwagons and progressively moves along to the Calliopes. One could spend a lot of time viewing and musing over a past era with this volume.

The book came out in 1978 and is still available at \$5.00. (Postage is 80c and insurance 50c): All Californians must add an extra 30c for sales tax.

## CIRCUS QUIPS...

... by KARL J. BISCHOFF

ONE FELLOW show employee was talking about his new diet drink, it's called a 3 RINGER, takes 3 oz. of Jack Daniels, 3 oz. jigger of Old Crow, 3 oz. of sugar from a floss machine, shake well, so far I LOST 3 POUNDS and MY DRIVER'S LICENSE.

ONE PICTURE of a circus is worth a thousand words BUT ONE VISIT to a circus is worth a thousand pictures.

ONE OWNER of a flea circus always knew that his fleas offspring some day would go to the dogs. A WEDDING RING, like a tourniquet, can stop your circulation.

EVERY SHOWMAN seems to know enough about arithmetic to FIGURE OUT what's coming to him.

# MAGIC

... by PROF. STU MILLER

The big magic event so far this year was the Siegfried & Roy magic spectacular on TV; they certainly proved themselves to be the super stars of magic and have everybody in the country talking about magic.

Several Florida based shows featuring magic have already gone out - Holiday Hippodrome with Floyd Bradbury & Co., Showtime Follies with Gary Holveck, and Int'l All Star Circus with Joe Eddy.

Most of the Florida tourist attractions have magic turns - Weeki-Watchi has an underwater magic act, Busch Gardens has magi Robert Huggins in it's Stanley Village Variety Show, and Disneyland has Bev Bergeron in it's Diamond Horseshoe Review. In Sarasota the Magic Moments Restaurant is featuring close up magic with Steve Smith and others.

Ward Hall and C. R. Christ are departing for a business/pleasure trip to South America with one of the stops to be a visit with Tihaney's big under canvas magic show.

Over in Jackson, Miss., Dick Berry & Co. presented their full evening show on Jan. 12th at the city auditorium for the Big Brothers and Big Sisters International. They had a cast of 12, backed by the house band.

Roy and Susan Huston in town and report they will be featured at the occult spectacular again in Montreal and also in Toronto. They had a big season last year including dates in California.

Bernie Berwyn and Ken Brewster will be with the Magnolia State Shows this year, working as a free act.

There's a lot of activity in Magic Time USA winterquarters. New illusions are being built by Dick Johnson and Norman Oaks. Existing equipment is being gone over by new stage manager Roger Taube. Sara Miller is creating new wardrobe for a new jazz opening production as well as for a new Disco nite production. All rolling stock is

# REPORT

## KIM DIXON SHOW

Acts appearing with the Kim Dixon Show, a Big John Strong production at Christmas time, were Kim Dixon, magic and illusions; Sandy Strong, assistant to Dixon and trained dogs; Ron Perry, wire act and juggling, and clowns Paulo and Philippe, plus Virginia Lee Fenton at the organ and Chuck Gomes on drums.

The show toured California during the Christmas season last year.

# REPORT

## ZOO ELEPHANT

A recent issue of Circus Report mentioned that the elephant "Morganetta" was no longer at the zoo in Springfield, Mass., and we had no additional information about her.

It has now been learned that the elephant resides at the Los Angeles Zoo, where her name has been changed to "Modoc".

Trainer Scott Riddle is in charge of the elephants there and reports the other elephants consist of two Asians "Geeta" and "Joyce", plus three Africans "McClain", "Tara" and "Sage."

being relettered by Wandering Art Studios using a new color scheme.

New acts this year will be the Inge Williams dog act, Mike Williams, juggling, Hal Haviland's pick out pony and European clown turn. Rick Percy is doing a new score for the show; the band will include Rick on trumpet as leader, Bonnie Percy on organ (with new synthesiser) and Johnny Rockwell on drums. Also new will be showgirls Brenda Galloway, Rita Whigham and Nina Whigham.

We open our 4th cross country tour for Mearl Johnson's North American Productions at the Bartow, Fla., Civic Center on Mar. 2nd. Our route will be in CR, stop by when you can,

## Show Dates

Hubert Castle Int'l Circus  
Mar. 1-9 Minneapolis, Minn.

Circus Vargas  
Mar. 4-6 Irvine, Calif.  
7-10 Cerritos

Cole All Star TV Circus  
Mar. 3 Lyons, NY  
4 Union Springs  
5 Cincinnati  
6 Fabius  
7 Auburn  
8 Canastota  
9 Madison

Garden Bros. Circus  
Mar. 7-9 Allentown, Pa.

Wm. Kay Circus  
Mar. 8-9 Albany, NY

Ringling-Barnum - Blue Unit  
Mar. 4-9 Richmond, Va.

Ringling-Barnum - Red Unit  
Mar. 4-9 Raleigh, NC

Royal Hanneford Circus  
Mar. 3-23 Chicago, Ill.  
7-9 Greenville, SC

Royal Lichtenstein Circus  
Mar. 3 Missoula, Mont.  
4 Bozeman  
5 Billings  
6 Miles City  
7 Bismarck, ND  
8 Fargo

Shrine Circus  
Mar. 6-9 Lansing, Mich.

---- MAGIC ----

Don Adams - World of Illusion  
Mar. 3 Tembroke, Va.  
7 Sandy Lake, Pa.  
8 Grove City

Blackstone Magic Show  
Mar. 4-16 Cleveland, Ohio

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Mar. 3 Carpio, ND  
4 Bowbells  
5 Columbus  
6 Fortuna  
7 Plentywood, Mont.

Andre Kole's World of Illusion  
Mar. 3 Los Angeles, Calif.

Magic Time USA - Prof. Miller  
Mar. 2 Bartown, Fla.  
3 Winter Haven  
4 Longwood  
5 Titusville  
6 Tavares  
8 Alachua

Felix Snipes - Magic/ESP  
Mar. 7-8 Lafayette, La.

---- OTHER DATES ----

Erik Adams - Balancing/Animals  
Mar. 6-9 Lansing, Mich.

Babes in Toyland  
Mar. 5-9 New Orleans, La.

Concession Operator School  
Mar. 9 St. Louis, Mo.

The Roller Diamonds - Roller Skaters  
Mar. 4-9 Oklahoma City, Okla.

Sports Show  
Mar. 4-9 Oklahoma City, Okla.

White House in Miniature  
Mar. 7-16 Albuquerque, NM



**TWO POWERHOUSE** shows kicked off their season last month - Hubler International made its annual bow at Cleveland (Mentor) for the PTA and featured: The Flying Lantony's, Roman Schmitt's Animals, Jorge Barreda's lions, The Jordanas, Lou Ann Jacobs, Pam Rosaire's Chimps, Pancho and Co., Antonio Trio, Mary Wengrzyn (female frog contortion - unusual), Fairfax Kids, plus clowns Freddie Large and Wayne Laiikala. Also there were Austin Miles, Florine Oler, Zoppe Arabian Riders, Almedas Dressage Ensemble and George himself presiding as everyone's Court Jester with his campy program bits and assorted shenanigans to keep up everyone's morale.

**SECOND** power-packed spectacular was IAN GARDEN's date at the Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto. He was aided and abetted by his gorgeous songstress wife, **MICKEY**. The program included: Eddie Schmitt's tigers, Walt King and Barbara with elephants, etc., Flying Lanes, The Quassars, Vive Las Vegas Aerial Ballet starring **MISTER SENSATION**, The Winn Troupe with their death walk and aerial motorcycle, Horton Bears, Susan's Afghans, the Laddies, Smiley Daley, Jungle Parody, Rhesus Monkeys with Johnny Zoppe, Sr., Trudy's Dalmatians, Pietro Canestrelli, clowns Rumpy and Bobby Davis joined by Smiley Davis, The Pirates of the Sky, with Charles Schlarbaum, musical director and competent **FRANK DAILEY** keeping things moving. Hope I haven't forgotten or overlooked anyone but with a long list it's possible. By heaven, I did!

The Brusky's and the Cyclonians, what a show!

**SNAPSHOTS:** **VASHEK & KATHY** to Buffalo for **HUBLER** prior to their touring with Beatty-Cole, . . . **PHIL MacDONALD** was seen on a recent "Knots Landing" TV segment by **BILL STRONG** . . . **BILL & TRUDY** going back to the Texas dates and then on to Mexico City for Atayde. . . **HUBLER** signed back the Cedar Rapids Shrine Date (It's in May) . . . One of my little talking birds phoned to say that **ART CONCELLO**, **MAGGIE SMITH**, **BOBBY JOHNSON**, **MILONGA CLINE**, **ROLAND KAISER** and **BETTY ESCALANTE** were seen at a table at Showfolks in January really having a great time. I should think so with that Merry Group. . . **NORBU**, injured last fall during a performance with Holiday On Ice, back in the show and was seen during the icer's L.A. engagement where **DOROTHY**

**YERKES**, looking Mar-velous, was working as a "dresser". Apparently she can't go touring until her union card is changed or fixed or something, which my spy wasn't quite sure of. . .

**SANDY DOBRITCH** has added two more parks to his lineup - **SEA WORLD** where he placed an Illusion Show and **SANTA CRUZ BEACH Boardwalk** where he set a Water-Extravaganza. **IAN GARDEN** says he'll lay dead the month of June. . . Rising inflation, phone promo bans, all makes playing those little Canadian dates non-profitable. With all his TV commitments he should worry. . . Among the jewels shining at

that fabulous Youngstown Grotto Circus will be **JOHNNY HERRIOTT**, **HARRY THOMAS** with his tigers (and Rowena with her pet cats), **TRUDY STRONG**'s dynamite new Dalmatian dog act, and everyone is raving about it. . . The Flying Lanes, Roman Schmitt with a unique combination of elephants and zebras. . . the Horthybagi Troupe.

**YOU KNOW** when a boo-boo is made in this column nine times out of ten it is because I have been fed erroneous information - and usually **DIR-ECT** from the horse's mouth. What I hear second and third hand is more often than not the truth. At any rate **ORVILLE LA ROSE** who is on the Yaarab Shrine Committee tells me they will indeed retain concession rights for the Atlanta Shrine Circus being held this year Apr. 2-12 in Marietta at the Cobb County Civic Center, located across from Dobbins Air Base. The Shriners will also have rides, amusements and a menagerie. A 60 x 60 tent will house the concession stock. The Civic Center is a smaller building apparently than was the old building played in downtown Atlanta. One of the plusses is better parking facilities. Now the circus will only do two-a-day with the matinees starting at noon.

**SA SA** and **DOADY FORNASARIE** write from Rome that after their Circo Togni stint they went on to Paris to join Cirque Amar for 8 weeks They go next to Copenhagen to link up with Circus Benneweis for a wonderful 30 season booking. Sa Sa said the route simply fell into place and I couldn't be happier for these two sweet kids.

**CLOSEUP GALLERY:** **FLORINE OLER**, that flame haired wiz at the keyboard, follows the Mentor date with a long tour for Bill Garden's "Showtime Follies". Before heading to the snow

(Continued on Page 20)

## PEOPLE

**KEN WILLER**, one finger balance, was a guest on the Mike Douglas TV Show, shown in the Los Angeles area on Feb. 11th.

**JEFF EARL** and **VIRGINIA EHLERT** were married on Feb. 16th at Sarasota, Fla. Jeff is the son of **DORIS** and **ROBERT EARL**, owners of the Roberts Bros. Circus.

**CAROL BUCKLEY** and her roller skating elephant were pictured in a recent issue of the weekly paper "Enquirer".

**WILL HUTCHINS** and his group of "Klowns" recently worked a Muscular Dystrophy Benefit Circus at Flipper's Roller Disco Palace in Hollywood, Calif. Will will soon leave for Australia where he will join Ashton's Circus as ringmaster for a two year tour.

**HERB MILLER**, circus bandleader, completed a successful tour in England this past December during which time he received excellent publicity and was the subject of a TV Special, aired on the BBC Network.

**CARLITO NAUMANN**, 11 yr. old liong trainer, was featured in a special photo story in the weekly "The Star", dated Oct. 2, 1979.

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## SPECIAL

In his book "One-Night Stands With American History: Odd, Amusing and Little Known Incidents" author Kurt Reiger relates the following incident:

"I spent hours with this one professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, and he said over and over that he couldn't think of a single anecdote.

"I engaged him in conversation, and just before I left he said, 'You've heard about Sitting Bull's horse, haven't you?' It's one of my favorite stories now."

The bittersweet saga occurred with the advent of the Ghost Dance War in the late 1800's, when a group of para-military lawmen were dispatched to arrest Sitting Bull.

The great Indian chief - at first - agreed to go peacefully with the officers, until the authorities began to deride the aging Sitting Bull.

It was developing into a full-scale shooting match when Sitting Bull's horse, a gift from Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, began to dance wildly amid the gunfire.

The horse had been trained by the trick riders to do these stunts on a gunshot cue, Reiger relates.

Sitting Bull lost his life in the resulting gunfire - as his horse pranced about doing Wild West Show tricks.

## WANTED

### CIRCUS MEMORABILIA

Am especially looking for posters and publicity photos of performers with the Polack Bros. Circus in the 1950's. Want photos of Rose Gould and Lexi Bruno.

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# REPORT

## TALENTED GROUP... by John Zimmerman

Almost hidden in the back of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus World is a modest but talented group of young acrobats. Several times a day they perform and instruct at the "Participation Circus" and often exhibit a flying trapeze act unmatched yet unheralded in the business. Due to days off and the equal chance for all performers to fly, the trapeze act changes. However the flyers are Tom Robin, Buddy McClelan, Bill Whitmire, Laura Rappa and Linda Stamen, who always dazzle the audience.

Tom and Buddy release, pirouette, and recatch the fly bar on their warm-up swings but Tom does this after he does a somersault with a half twist and catches the fly bar again... certainly the most innovative and unbelievable stunt originated on the flying trapeze in decades. Tom does a pirouette return from every trick and dismounts with a quadruple. His show tricks are double forward, double-double, and triple. He is currently slapping wrists in practice on a triple twisting double layout to catcher John Zimmerman, who is supervisor of Participation Circus.

In addition Tom attends full time college at night and drives 1,000 miles a week. When he receives his degree in electronics in June, he says he will start paying serious attention to his flying trapeze work.

Buddy, who is also a catcher, pirouettes, does the triple, and is perfecting the double-double and double cutaway with 1½ twists to the catcher.

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## In Memoriam

TENKO (45) Japan's most popular magician, died of a heart attack on Jan. 31, 1979 in Japan. He got his start demonstrating magic in a store, and in 1968 was signed by Nippon Television as a feature performer on an escape show. From there he rose to almost instant stardom, heading shows and performing before the Japanese Emperor several times. Survivors include two daughters and his father.

VIC TORSBERG (73) an actor and magician, died Dec. 25, 1979 at his home in Chicago. He toured with theatrical companies before settling down in Chicago where he worked for the National Magic Co. and was active in the local area magic clubs. Survivors include his son Robert, and daughter Diane, plus several grandchildren. His wife Zelda passed away several years ago.

A typical routine is double forward, double layout, double-double, double-full, triple, passing leap, catcher somersaults to fly bar and then an impressive array of dismounts.

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## REPORT

A NOVEL CIRCUS . . . by Kathleen Walsh

(The following report was sent in by Clark Beurlen who obtained it from an English paper that was dated Dec. 22, 1979).

A circus without performing animals, the first in Western Europe, opened in Southend last night after days of battle with hurricane-force winds that had threatened to destroy it.

In less than a week the Circus Hassani's blue-and-orange striped big top has been dismantled three times to keep it from being blown down and into ribbons.

Mrs. Tamara Hassani, current proprietor of the circus with her husband Ali, said: "it cost us L.29,000 and if we had lost it we would have been finished before we started."

Although yesterday's snow and sleet fell, the PVC tent stayed snug and dry inside, with electric heating, at the council car park near the sea front.

Rehearsals went on all day to make up for lost time. The planned special Friday morning performance for needy children and the handicapped had to be abandoned and the invited guests given seats for later performances instead.

The circus without animals was started by the family of Coco the Clown, in accordance with his dying wish five years ago, and it has had to fight opposition not only from the elements but from those who favor performing animals. One person even sent an anonymous threatening letter.

Mr. Ken Julian, the circus producer, said: "We have got the backs up of other circus families, too, but if we had not started this show, someone else would have done so one day. Mr. Ronnie Smart has said we don't have animals because we can't afford them. But we could easily engage them and that would be cheaper than paying human performers.

"What we are doing is to give people a choice. Those who want to see performing animals can go to the other circuses, and those who don't can come to us. This is an important turning point in the history of circus."

Last night, at last, Coco's son Sasha went on in Coco's costume and makeup as Coco II. And as Sasha eased into the old Coco-style routine he had as his "feed" a young Cambridge graduate, Robbie Barnett, 25, who foresook the academic to learn the clowning business.



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# REPORT

## NORDMARK BEGINS 14th SEASON

The new decade marks the beginning of the 14th consecutive annual tour of Jim Nordmark's highly successful "International All Star Circus". The 32 member troupe will play 308 towns in 39 states before returning to Sarasota in December.

Hines Rucker is managing the unit, as well as serving as MC and presenting his highly acclaimed uncaged leopard. This is Rucker's eighth year with the Nordmark organization. Other long time veterans appearing in this year's edition include the O'Briens, with unicycle and slackwire turns, now in their sixth year with the show; and Leigh Ketchum, leading the International All Star Circus six-piece band, returning for his third season.

Other features in this year's production include Billy and Betty Earl with their Bonnie & Clyde musical specialties, vocals and Henrietta the yodelling chicken. Joe Eddie is presenting an incredible array of illusions this year, including a live Elephant vanish. Michelle Malvern is the aerial feature. Bob Fairchild is there with fabulous juggling, including ping pong balls juggled with the mouth. Mike and Sally LaTorres present their baby elephant Stony and a performing Cockatoo display. Patti Rucker rounds out the

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performing company with her foot juggling. The performance runs an hour and a half.

Nordmark's second unit "Jubilee On Ice" will be going out for its third season this year. Eleven weeks have already been booked. The tour, primarily of Dinner Theatres, will open July 9th in Philadelphia. Bobby Denard will again direct and choreograph the show.

The ice show involvement has led Nordmark to two potentially profitable new projects which should bear fruit this year. Nordmark has obtained the world-wide television rights to the World Professional Figure Skating Championships to be held in Madrid, in April. Nordmark also has the United States Figure Skating Association rights for the production and distribution of home video products. A series of instructional tapes is now in the planning stages.

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## On The Cover

This week's cover photo shows the Forepaugh-Sells Circus of 1900 getting ready for their daily street parade.

## In Memoriam

**BERNICE DEAN** (65), popular western performer, died on Feb. 14th of a heart attack on the Indio, Calif., fairgrounds.

She spent most of her life in the western field, and was a Life Member of the Professional Cowboy Association.

She married Frank Dean while with a wild west show in Japan, and they always worked as a team, doing roping, riding, whips, knives, etc.

Together they appeared with all of the major circuses in this country, as well as appearing in rodeos and working club dates. They often went overseas on tours and worked in some 13 different countries.

For many years they lived in San Jose, Calif., but for the past 11 years they had resided in Palmdale, Calif.

## By Crane



# **SHRINE CIRCUS**

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### **Miscellaneous**

SIDE LIGHTS ON THE SAM T. POLACK Show

... by Sally Payne

Carlos and Carol Obando drove 700 miles to be a part of the Sam T. Polack Circus at Louisville, from their home town of Rochester, NY. Then after their last turn they started to pack up and head back to Rochester, where they had to be on Monday to help Grace McIntosh get set up for her Shrine date which opened Feb. 13-17.

Vicki Hendricks is working the perch act with Carlos for the time being, as Carol pulled some stomach muscles during practice in cold weather.

### **Notice**

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## In Memoriam

JUNE CORNELIUS (79), a former member of the vaudeville team of "The Four Gibsons" died recently. She was born in San Jose, Calif., and joined her three sisters in their act "The Three Gibson Girls" when she was 10 years old. They made their last appearance at the Pantage Theatre in San Diego in 1917. She is survived by two daughters and several grandchildren.

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**REPORT**

**GUNTHER GEBEL-WILLIAMS** - Circus Star is  
Now A U. S. Citizen

... by **MIKE MARTIN**

Genial animal wizard, Gunther Gebel-Williams, after 11 seasons of thrilling American circus audiences, became an American citizen in late December in ceremonies held at Tampa, Fla.

Along with 52 other slightly nervous, but generally excited men and women, Gunther became a full part of the country in which he has enjoyed so much success and happiness.

Gebel-Williams was accompanied at the federal courthouse, for the naturalization by U. S. District Judge Wm. Terrell Hodges, by his wife Sigrid and his sister and brother-in-law, who were visiting from Germany. Ringling Circus public relations spokeswoman Nini Finkelstein was also on hand with a stuffed elephant for Gunther and American flags for the other new citizens.

As 'Head-liner' with the Red Unit of RBBB, Gunther oversees 18 real elephants, 28 leopards, 29 tigers and 30 horses in the three hour circus performance which opened in Venice, Fla., on Jan. 24th, for its 11 month cross-country tour.

**HAL HAVILAND SEZ . . .**

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**BOBBY BEROSINI** and his Orangutans were guests on the Mike Douglas TV Show the afternoon of Feb. 20th;

**BOB GREENE**, calliope player, has reportedly been signed to tour with the Great American Circus this year.

**THE DAVIDE ZOPPE FAMILY** opened at Madison, Wisc., Feb. 16-17, then jumped to Toronto, Buffalo, Albany and Montreal for Shrine Circus dates. After playing the St. Louis Shrine Circus they will tour the Canadian B Circuit for six weeks in Western Canada and will wind up the season in Texas.

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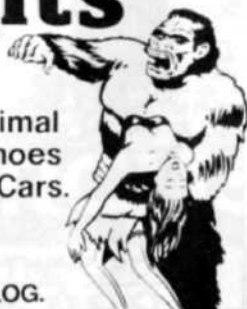
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RC/PM

February 11th 1980

Dear Sir,

The Organizing Comitee of the International Festival of Circus of Monte-Carlo saw and appreciated your paper in *Circus Repot N° 3* of 21st January 1980, written by James A. CONLEY. And they are very pleased about this.

But we would like to mention something very important for us and for the real directors of management and administration of these Festivals.

Sergio is not really a ringmaster, but rather a Master of ceremony or an evening ringmaster featured by his qualities in keeping the show moving and in setting up the show.

We would appreciate very much if you could make an other paper explaining that all the organization for the administration and succes of the shows of our festivals, are due to MM. Willy TOGNI and MURILLO.

Thanking you in advance for your comprehension and your co-operation, we remain, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary



CIRCUS REPORT  
Don Marcks  
525 Oak Street  
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U.S.A.

# MAI-MAG

... from WILLIAM WOTSCH

In the Spring of 1938 the SE Ranch Rodeo appeared at our new Cleveland Arena. It was led by Col. Jim Eskew.

We put up corrals in the arena backyard, dug post holes and put up posts and cattle fencing, just like out on a ranch. Did was hauled in and our tile floor was covered with it. We also put up fencing around the hockey fence.

Jim Eskew, Jr. and Buddy Medford did trick and fancy roping. Cy Compton roped about 10 riders in one big loop, and Thomasina Mix, a daughter of the famous Tom Mix, appeared as a rider.

An Indian band, consisting of about 5 pieces, played for the show, sitting near where the bucking chutes were set up.

A fellow who was billed as Pancho Villa, Jr. let himself be tossed by a bull and flipped over on the bull's back. He was a small man and put on a good show.

The Virginia Reel was done on horse back and they had bucking horses, steer wrestling, bull riding, calf roping, races and other things that are connected with rodeos.

Acts featured were a pose of the End of the Trail and a Roman riding number where they jumped over a car.

**BILLY BARTON (Continued)**

belt she provided show music for the Holiday Rambler Exhibit at Roberts Arena where those zany musical comedy artists BONNIE & CLYDE were a WOW as always. . . My thanks to ORVILLE and MYRTLE LaROSE for sending a gift copy of THE CLOWNS for my rather limited circus library (I probably have LESS circus books than does anyone in show business, by choice, as I am not a collector). It's an interesting book, written by former clown-juggler-acrobat JOHN H. TOWSEN. . . Speaking of authors, which I do a lot since I'm one and am now connected professionally with that wacky world (almost as crazy as this one), that fantabulous CONNIE CLAUSEN (to steal an adjective coined by COUNT NICHOLAS) may be seen making a few personal appearances this year connected with a circus date here and there. She has indicated not being averse to doing so provided such appearances do not conflict with her hectic schedule. I keep twisting her arm to reissue I LOVE YOU HONEY, BUT THE SEASON'S OVER which is almost IMPOSSIBLE to find. Everytime a library stocks it the book is stolen immediately! Well, I'm a persistent cuss and shall keep harping at her until she puts the book out again just to shut me up. The beautiful blue-eyed, blond author has just gotten over a real battle with Mr. Flu - making his annual appearance and life hell for most of us. . . BURGERS, now in Florida, moved into a new mobile living unit. . . In Jan. MAE WEST was named the No. 1 Manwatcher by a California Woman's group celebrating National Man Watcher's Week. La West was so-named because she "brought this national pastime out of the closet". Like hell she did. I know a few who beat her to it. Just kidding, Mae. . . CAVARETTAS back from Deutschlandhalle, also BOB ATTERBURY whose Rocket Car was a GREAT BIG SMASHEROO (no pun intended) ... KLEMENTIS back at work at Lake Tahoe, all healed and happy. Also there are those marvelous VILLAMS, now a duo. Not true that little Ilonka

is working in the act, at least not now. . . later may be. . . Bob Atterbury told me that CLINT OLSON is the new driver of his rocket car. . . Bigwigs at Deutschlandhalle flew over Mr. RASSINI for the date. DONNY RYAN is the act's rigger. The Rocket Car will appear at Detroit for TOMMY HANNEFORD and will be thrilling park-goers at the GREAT ADVENTURE this year in the Bauer-Hall produced circus. . . DINKY PATTERSON played that Disco near Toronto, following juggler KENNY SHERBURNE. . . JOHNNY JORDAN bought that Motorcycle Globe act formerly worked by PETER LUVAS which Pete acquired from the originator of the circus novelty, SPEEDY BABBS Johnny will take the act to Circus Circus in Las Vegas and I shall be interested to know how they are setting that globe in a casino. . . PEGGY MILLS is sporting an elaborate new motorhome. . . Word is that Circus Vargas has a top-notch show this season. . . THE VALENCIAS (new flying act) appeared recently at Lake Tahoe with their knockabout act, are now playing dates for M & M Internationale and GEORGE HUBLER. . . TOMMY BENTLEY and CHUCK CLANCY already promoting their California Spring tour. . . Mentor Promo, by the by, was up 20% over last year, and Ian's Toronto date had a slambang box office rush the very first day the ad ran in the newspaper. . . Maybe all this war-scare is good for show business?

THE FINAL NOTE: Good news that the newly revamped Hamid-Morton route is solid from its Feb. opener to its June closer - only two weeks out on the entire route. One of the new towns is Binghamton (NY) booked to replace Wilkes-Barre lost to the Hubler organization. And that's it for this week.

SEE you down the road, luvs.

**REPORT****TWINKLES THE CLOWN TAKES A BRIDE**

Timothy Noel Tegge and Gena Marie Stinnett were married aboard the "Queen Mary" at Long Beach, Calif., on Feb. 10th. The double ring ceremony was performed by the ship's chaplain.

Tim (Twinkles the Clown) is the son of Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Tegge and assistant producer of the TNT & Royal Olympic Circus, based in Garden Grove, Calif. The new Mrs. Tegge is currently a news video tape editor at the NBC Studio in Burbank, but will travel with the family circus this season.

Some 150 guests attended the wedding reception aboard the huge vessel, including Parley and Ernestine Baer, the John Strong family, and the Alex Buchanans, former owners of the Vacationer Motel in Baraboo, Wisc.

After a short honeymoon the couple was expected to return to Garden Grove to prepare for their first circus tour together.

**Miscellaneous**

The C. R. Frank Popcorn and Supply Co., is conducting a "Free Concession Operator School" in St. Louis, Mo. (Rodeway Inn, Jefferson and Market Streets) on March 9th.

The session runs from 1 to 4 p.m. and covers such subjects as: How to Base Pricing; How to Account Your Net Profits; How to Use Promotions. There will also be demonstrations of: Nacho, Funnel Cakes, French Waffles, Elephant Ears, Flying Saucers, Italian Ice and Slush Puppie.

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**PEOPLE**

**HARRY ANDERSON**, magician, was a guest on the Mike Douglas TV Show the afternoon of Feb. 27th.

**FRED WAGENFUEHR** has his hand-carved circus models on display at the Circus Museum in San Antonio, Texas.

**PAULA PANDA**, illusionist, is busy revamping her show for small dates.

**BLACKSTONE** the Magician was featured on the TV Show "Real People" on Feb. 27th, where he sawed a woman in half.

**new ARRIVALS**

**HARRY and GAY BLACKSTONE** are the parents of a baby girl - Bellamie Gay Blackstone - born Jan. 8th at Redlands, Calif. The youngster arrived at 6:19 p.m. and weighed in at 7 lbs 7 oz

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## THEATRE OF ILLUSION (Cont'd)

song "That's Entertainment" accompanied by the band that augmented the complete show. The curtains then opened to a stage full of beautiful girls attired in disco-type outfits of green with a sprinkling of rhinestones. Marko enters in white tails, with matching top hat, and proceeds with such tricks as Gloves to Dove, Vanish and Reappearance of the same dove, Cane thru Girl, Silks from Hat, Production of two large flower bouquets from a silk, and more silks produced from the hat. The hat was then shown empty and immediately a rabbit was produced from it. I might add that this is a feat not ordinarily seen in these modern days of night club type magic acts. The rabbit was then caused to vanish into "thin air".

Next, from empty silks, 2 cages of live canaries appeared, then a large cage with a live duck and a stick of goldfish bowls. Then four more large bouquets were produced from a cloth, with 15 more bouquets that appeared were stuck in the floor transforming the entire stage into a vertible "garden of flowers". From a single bloom a gigantic flower bush appeared. Another duck made its appearance from a cluster of silks and nearly made good its escape into the audience, but was headed off by one of the constant assistants.

Flowers were plucked off four bushes, held by four of the lovely assistants, by Marko who then caused more flowers to visibly grow back on the bushes where the flowers had just been removed. It might also be noted that the flowers that "re-grew" were a different color than those that had been removed.

Following this was one of the real classics of magic - the dancing hank. A handkerchief was borrowed from a spectator, in the audience, and then was seen to take on somewhat human characteristics by dancing about, jumping around and generally frolicking all over the stage. It almost

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made me believe in spooks - with muscles, no less.

Immediately upon the return of the spectators hankerchief Marko returned to the stage to present his own version of the Golf Ball Trick, then a clever Passe Passe Bottle trick that had the audience laughing.

Illusions that were to follow included: a full stage presentation of the Cannon and Drum Illusion which involved the "invisible" shooting of a girl from a massive cannon, on one side of the stage, to a paper covered drum on the other side of the stage that had previously been suspended in the air. How Marko accomplished this miracle is a complete mystery to me.

Another of Marko's original illusions followed - a Vertical Sword Box. A girl stepped into the box, is apparently "sliced" to ribbons by 5 sharp looking swords, but then steps from the box none the worse for the ordeal. A trick using a garter, a jewelry box and a beautiful young lady's leg followed (not necessarily in that order), then a unique version of the Hindu Basket was presented.

The next full stage illusion to take place was the original Thurston "Crushing A Woman". The woman, after climbing into a large box, was apparently crushed by a great weight, then disappearing from the box when it was opened, then reappearing running down the aisle from the rear of the auditorium. Needless to say, this had a startling effect on the audience.

Once again the lovely Suzanne Ramsey returned, with a chorus of small children, and sang the musical section of "Do-Re-Mi".

Marko then returned to the stage to perform a favorite trick of everyone's, the Vanishing Bird Cage, complete with "invisible" canary. Try as he might Marko, nor his volunteer assistants from the audience, could not hold on to the cage and keep it from disappearing.

The Levitation of the Princess Karnac rounded out the first half of the program resplendent with 6 harem girls, doing a beautifully choreographed dance routine, before the arrival of the "Princess" in a hand carried sedan chair by her two slaves.

Intermission came with the first half of the show running a tight one hour. Souvenir programs were sold, with sales going quite well.

Act 2 opened with a very quick version of the Glass Box Illusion, then went into a modern routine of that age old classic "Sawing A Lady in Two" with yet another beautiful dance chore-

(Next Page Please)

## THEATRE OF ILLUSION (Cont'd)

ographed into a routine making it more than "just another trick."

The startling vanish of a bowl of water thrown at the audience allowed enough time for the stage to be reset for the next scene. Set in a fairy tale type scene "Alice In Wonderland" was miraculously produced from a seemingly empty trunk that was built right before the audiences eyes, and filled with trays with several different types of costumes. This was a clever adaptation of the famous "United Nations of Dolls" illusion. Alice was then placed in three large top hats, by none other than the "Mad Hatter" himself, divided into three separate parts by six large stainless steel blades. The hats were then scattered completely apart, with reckless abandon, about the stage. Marko arrived upon the scene, to save the day, by restoring Alice to her original state of togetherness.

The Hippity-Hop Rabbits was then performed, with much by-play with the audience participating, while the stage was being set for the next full stage spectacle.

The curtains parted to a circus-type setting, complete with tiger (girl in tiger costume) and trainer. After what seemed like futile attempts to make the tiger perform its tricks, the trainer coaxed the tiger to lie down, when two attendants immediately captured the tiger in a large net. Fastening the net to a framework the tiger was hoisted approximately 20 feet overhead, then Marko taking over the situation, caused the tiger to vanish, in full view of the audience, with the net falling empty to the floor.

Another of Marko's original illusions "Lady Divida" followed, and then a transformation that had Marko seemingly transformed into a shaggy gorilla, but then to everyone's surprise he appeared in disguise, as he chased the gorilla from the stage.

It was then time for the finale with the entire cast introducing themselves. The cast consisted of 12 men and women, excluding Marko the Magnificent, and his wife, the incomparable Phyllis Berry.

The show closed with Suzanne Ramsey singing once again the song "That's Entertainment", for sure! From start to finish the show last an hour and 45 minutes, exactly.

In viewing the show, and having seen the Harry Blackstone Magic Show on HBO several days before, I noted several similarities in both shows.

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## Miscellaneous

This year the Louisville Gardens charged each of the trailers, on the Sam T. Polack Circus, a \$10.00 per day fee for electrical hook-ups.

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Also the review of the Blackstone show in CR prompted me to inquire as to why this was so. Upon confronting Marko with this question, after the show, he laughed slightly and simply replied, "You must remember one important factor that Harry Blackstone, Jr. and I share. We both had the same teacher - Harry Blackstone, Sr."