

THE CIRCUS REPORT

AMERICA'S
FAVORITE CIRCUS WEEKLY

Our 10th Year

Number 40

October 5, 1981



DEBBIE THE CLOWN

SHOW DATES

- Bauer-Hall All Star Circus
to Nov. 1 Jackson, NJ
- Beatty-Cole Circus
Oct 5-6 San Marcos, Tex.
- Big John Strong Circus
Oct 9 Woodland, Calif
10 Lodi
- Carson & Barnes Circus
Oct 5 Pulaski, Va.
6 Lynchburg
7 Farmville
8 South Hill
9-10 Durham, NC
- Castle Int'l Circus
Oct 7-10 Utica, NY
- Dr. Pepper Circus
Oct 8-26 Dallas, Texas
- Hoxie Bros. Circus
Oct 5 Pensacola, Fla.
6 Pascagoula, Miss
7 Hattiesburg
8 Picayne
9 Slidell, La.
10 Covington
11 Abbeville
- Pickle Family Circus
Oct 10-11 Benecia, Calif
- Ringling-Barnum Blue
Oct 6-11 Detroit, Mich
- Ringling-Barnum - Red
Oct 8-12 Denver, Colo
- Royal Crown Circus
Oct 6-7 E. Moline, Ill
10-11 Moline
- Royal Lichtenstein
Oct 5 Omaha, Nebr.
6 Fremont
7 Manhattan, Kans
8 Emporia
9 Lawrence
10 Tulsa, Okla

TNT & Royal Olympic
Oct 8-12 Louisville, Ky

--- MAGIC ---

Kramien
Oct 10 Chehalis, Wash

Krystali
Oct 5-6 Midland, Texas
7-8 Odessa
9-11 Lubbock

Darwin Ortiz
Oct 9-10 Atlanta, Ga.

Starfire
Oct 5-6 Idaho Falls, Idaho
7-8 Butte, Montana
9 Helena
10-11 Great Falls

--- OTHER DATES ---

Burr's Fun-O-Rama
Oct 4-11 Fryeburg, Me.

James H. Drew Exposition
Oct 5-10 Dublin, Ga.

Bobby and Rosa Gibbs
Oct 8-26 Dallas, Texas

My Heart Is In Your Shoes
to Oct 18 New York, NY

Royal Scots Dragoons
Oct 6 Hampton, Va.
7 Wilmington, NC
8 Columbia
9-10 Raleigh
11 Asheville

Royal Horse Fair

by RUTH FINDLEY

It is a breathless moment when eight year old Randy Booker raises himself to a standing position six feet from the ground on a 2,000 pound horse.

Brigadoon, one of the world's largest horses, never breaks stride as he trots rhythmically around the circus ring, ears back, listening to the soft commands of his young master. There are no lines, no reins or whips, there is only the trust and understanding between the boy and this gentle giant he calls "Bobby."

The two are part of the Royal Horse Fair a traveling circus under an old-time red, white and blue big top tent, which just recently played at the San Mateo Fair in San Mateo, Calif.

The Coors sponsored show is the dream of Hillsborough resident Phillip Gerald Booker, who envisions an even more "splendorous" extravaganza, transported by rail from coast-to-coast.

"You have to love this business," he says

and then adds "you have to have a drive, a dream and ambition beyond the normal man."

Booker's ambition is contagious. His wife Constance and her sister Carolyn Atkinson, both daughters of the late L. C. Smith, former president of the Cow Palace board of directors, combined their mutual love for horses and breathed life into his dream.

With the backing given by Coors, this 4th year of the circus looks to be the most successful. Everything is bigger and better. The 10,000 sq. ft. tent, costing around \$50,000 encompasses a 45 ft show ring, 5 ft. bigger than last year. The show includes 12 to 15 performers and 24 performing animals, including the fabulous Babe, one of the world's smallest horses.

The entire Booker-Smith-Atkinson clan is steeped in horsemanship. Booker and his wife have 10 children. Among them Randy who most exemplifies his father's ambitions. As perhaps the youngest professional bareback rider anywhere, he, like his father, has show business in his blood.

Randy is the "pick of the litter", accord-

(Continued on Page 9)

Special

WHALE EXPERT RECALLS HIS DAYS WITH "COLOSSUS!"

(by Charles Allbright, from an article in the Arkansas Gazette, Aug. 18, 1981).

They called themselves the Pacific Coast Whaling Company.

What they had was one old whale, embalmed to the gills, mounted on a railroad flatcar.

In everlasting repose, the whale had his mouth propped wide open.

Charles Roark once slept in that cavernous mouth.

He recalls, "The whale was just a tremendous attraction."

Roark at 64 is retired at Malvern, Ark., the hometown he left as a teenager to go with a traveling tent picture show.

In half a century the man traveled with 17 circus groups, Ringling among them, performing Punch & Judy in the side show and an illusion act in center ring.

When circuses went to Florida for the winter, Roark hooked up with medicine shows and burlesque companies.

And, glory be, with "Colossus!" the whale.

"I remember the day I joined the show in Valdosta, Ga. I didn't have to ask anybody where the whale was showing. I just followed my nose. I suppose the human body can get used to anything. It wasn't but a few days until I was able to sit on the whale and eat my lunch."

Charles Roark became a lecturer for the Pacific Coast Whaling Company.

"They gave me a seaman's uniform with gold braid and a stick to point with." And they provided a lecture to memorize.

"I wasn't allowed to use any side show

imagination. The lecture was in case somebody visited the attraction who might really know something about a whale."

His lecture memorized, Roark became an authority on the gape-mouthed "Colossus!"

The show employed nothing but authorities.

"I recall one old carney, he was known to us as 'Whale Oil Gus', and his job was to go a day ahead of the show and lecture to the school children to whet their appetite to see the big whale. He had done it so long and so well that he actually believed he was a sea captain."

And come they did, Depression days children of all ages, wide-eyed and grabbing their noses.

The whale was just about as long as the railroad car. We had a man whose job it was to go around the whale searching for soft spots and putting in more embalming fluid."

Local folks lined up at both ends of the car, paid dimes and came aboard.

"If I was lecturing at the tail, another expert would be walking around in his uniform, pointing and lecturing at the whale's head. The people just kept coming, it was tremendous, the line never stopping."

Except right at the end.

"At the exit we had an expert who picked up a lump of something and called it ambergris. He explained that ambergris was an ingredient produced by the whale, highly valuable because it was converted into exotic perfume. We just happened to have plenty of that exotic perfume available right there on the railroad car for 15cents a bottle."

In combination, old "Colossus!" and the

(Continued on Page 26)

ROYAL HORSE FAIR (Continued)

ing to his dad. "I told this young man if he practices eight hours a day for 15 yrs I'll make him a millionaire," Booker said proudly. "Of our 10 children, he shows the greatest interest and promise. The bareback rider is the most aristocratic, most respected and best-paid performer in the circus."

Says the young Booker, "I don't like it, I love it."

This year he can stand, perfectly balanced on the back of the majestic Brigadoon, a cross between the breeds of Shire, Clydesdale and Percheron. He recently discovered he can jump up and down while the huge animal trots around the ring. Next year, Randy Booker will perform a feat reserved for the true professional bareback rider, he will jump rope.

Most of the animals in The Royal Horse Fair are raised and rehearsed in Hillsborough, on a 15 acre ranch. "No one in Hillsborough realizes we have this show business thing right in their midst," Booker said.

RBBB Route Books: 1941-49-50-51-52
53-54-55-64-66 - \$7.00 each or all for
\$50.00

Al G. Kelly Route Book: 1964-65 sea-
son \$5.00

8x10 B&W Photo: Otto Greibling with
young lady, Columbus, Ohio 1958 -
\$7.50

8x10 B&W Photo: Capt. Hugo Schmitt
with elephant, zebra, llama, Toledo,
Ohio 1959 - \$5.50

8x10 B&W Photo: Dwarf clown "Jimmy"
Clyde Beatty Circus, So. Bend, Ind. 1958
\$4.50

Contract, Cole Bros. World Wide Tour/En-
velope, to Fred Rowen, trapeze and Bal-
ancing, for sum of \$25.00 a week, signed
by M. J. Downs, Oct. 1907 - \$25.00

Souvenir program from exhibit of B&B
Two Hemisphere Wagon, while on dis-
play at 11th & Brady St., Davenport, Ia.
1945, many pictures of some old time
greats - \$25.00

RBBB Circus Magazine & Program 1952,
many great photos - \$7.50

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From the Office Wagon

by Bradd and Sheila Frank

What we will try to bring forth in this column will be helpful ideas and discussions that will touch on various aspects of the circus industry. Possibly, some subjects will not be to everyone's liking, but, nonetheless, if this business is to flourish and let alone survive, then it must be that we as both a business and an American institution must expect constructive criticism. We invite your comments and suggestions and ask that you contribute to this column. Our only objective is the betterment of the circus in general.

There are two well known sayings that bear much truth when talking about circuses today. One is "A picture is worth a thousand words" and the other is "The first impression is a lasting impression." If these two sayings are taken seriously, they can be "worth their weight in gold" .. to quote another.

With ever increasing operating expenses, all of us tend to cut corners in one way or

another, the show owner is no exception. But, unnecessary cutbacks can and do cut into box office receipts, and that effects us all from booking agent to performer to workingman. With today's economy the way it is, the wise show owner, and performer, must spend his hard earned dollars wisely and where the general public can see: in improvements. One such expenditure is equipment.

What does the show look like after its equipment is spotted and the big top is being put up? This is the first thing the public and potential patrons will see as they drive by on the way to work or to school. Do they see unpainted trucks and trailers? Do they see a ratty looking tent with rips and tears and holes in it? Even well used rolling stock, as well as a used top can be made to look appealing if well maintained and mended. Another eyesore is "sidewall droop." There is nothing so amateurish looking as sidewall hanging hither and yon from a top. A few extra minutes spent on putting up the top means a more eye appealing operation.

Another cheap investment for the show owner is either uniforms or in the summertime, simple colored T-shirts with the show logo. Barebacks should be horses ridden in the ring, not walking around the lot spouting obscene language. A surprising number of parents, including kinkers, do not appreciate what they hear around a show lot.

A current controversy nation-wide is animal welfare and protection. A simple canvas awning attached to an animal truck, or trailer will provide shade and shelter for the animals, plus convey to the public that animals are cared for. Privately owned performing animals should also be afforded such care even if it should mean a producer or committee would have to insert a special clause in their contracts. Another cheap investment on any show is a rake. It helps ride the area of unwanted parasites and shortens lot clean-ups.

A little paint on equipment keeps trucks, trailers, midway and props looking neat and cared for. Workingmen with neat haircuts and clean clothes should be the rule on any show, as it now is on a lot of carnivals today.

All show personnel, including performers,

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A Real Treat

by William Watson

July 16, 1956, was a sad day for all Circus Fans. That was the day that RBBB used a big top for the last time. It was stated at the time that the day of the big tops was over.

But, on Sept. 11-13, 1981, in the very same city, Pittsburgh, Pa., this statement was laid to rest.

Carson & Barnes Circus pitched their tent on a lot in Pittsburgh, and it was a day for all those who were there to really remember.

I will not go into a line-up of performers as this has been done several times in the pages of Circus Report. Two shows were presented on Friday, three shows on Saturday and three on Sunday. Often during the three days I heard people say how much fun it was to see a circus under the big top.

On Saturday afternoon it rained for about a half hour, but those in attendance did not mind it at all. They were at a circus, mud and all!

During the three days I had the pleasure

of cutting up some jackpots with a lot of my fellow circus fans, from Hagerstown, Md., Philadelphia, Pa., West Virginia and locally.

On Friday morning I had the pleasure of explaining for a cable TV crew the procedure of how a big top is erected.

A very nice side light to the stand here was the lot the show was pitched on was just across the river from the old Exposition Show Grounds. On that lot such shows as Barnum & Bailey, Ringling Bros., Sells Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Buffalo Bill, 101 Ranch Wild West, plus the Johnny J. Jones and Rubin & Cherry carnivals played.

All-in-all this was a weekend all will remember for a long time.

PEOPLE

BOBBI and JOHN McGINN, clowns from Prescott, Ariz., worked the Coconino County Fair in Arizona, Sept. 24-27.

Clown Contest

The Central States Shrine Clown Association held its convention in Omaha, Nebr., Sept. 10-12. Approximately 400 Shrine Clowns from the seven state area participated.

Single competition for Make-Up was held in White Face, Auguste, Hobo and Character. Skit competition followed for Individual, Multi-Team and Unit. Parade Clowns were judged during the four hour parade in downtown Omaha. Judges for the Parade Clowns were wives of the competitors.

Shrine Parade featured Shrine Bands playing circus marches, Oriental Bands, Mounted Patrols, Motorized Units, new and antique cars or rare vintage, plus many, many Shrine Clowns.

The White Horse Patrol from Sioux City, Iowa, and the Black Horse Patrol from St. Louis, Mo., were excellent. A real feature was a Black Mule Patrol from Colorado Springs, Colo. All mounted units were excellent.

Hosts for the 1981 convention was the

Tangier Shrine Temple of Omaha. The 1982 convention will be held in Oklahoma City.

Judges for the Clown Competition were:

LeRoy Arringdale, who clowned with the Al G. Barnes-Sells Floto Circus, has taught clowning and circus, is an accomplished painter of wildlife, clowns and circus, and is an Honorary member of the Tangier Shrine Clown Unit.

Jack Vestal, a sales representative for Arm and Hammer Co., and an active Shrine clown for some 15 years. He is also an Honorary member of the Tangier Clown Unit.

Roland Gibbs, a veterinarian and circus historian and writer.

Doug Paterson, Associate Professor of Dramatic Arts at the University of Nebraska. He has produced, directed and acted in many theatrical productions.

Charles Chapman, Assistant Professor of Dramatic Arts at the University of Nebraska and technical director for the University theatrical productions.

Where's the music?

by DUDLEY HAMILTON

I have just returned from a four hundred mile round trip to see the Beatty-Cole show. It was a great show and well worth the trip, except for one thing. The music.

The music was professionally presented and the talent of the group providing the music was obvious. The selections presented just didn't go well with a circus program.

Of the five super shows today and they are Ringling Red and Blue, Circus Vargas, Carson & Barnes and Beatty-Cole, only one show still presents a program of traditional circus music. That one stand out show is Carson & Barnes.

Dorey Miller, the owner of Carson & Barnes should be told by someone that his years of experience and understanding of what the ticket buying public wants to see at a circus is showing.

For a patron to go home and truly feel that they have attended a circus, they must

have been exposed to four things. A tented show, circus music, elephants and clowns. The tents are all about gone. This is explained to us as an economic necessity and I can buy that.

The failure to provide circus music written by and for the circus makes no sense. If a show is going to hire seven or eight people to play night club music for us, why can't the same seven or eight folks play real circus music for the crowd?

As the Beatty-Cole program ended, I asked a young couple seated next to me, what they thought about the music. Their reply was that it was good, but not what they had expected to hear. I then asked if they would have preferred traditional circus music instead and their reply was "yes."

The music played in most shows today is as much out of place as a football fight song would be at a church service. Heaven help those of us that go to a circus to see a circus. It seems that Circus management isn't willing to help.

Zoppe Circus

by BILL WALTERS

The Alberto Zoppe Circus was in Little Rock, Ark., for the tenth "Small Fry Circus" sponsored by the North Little Rock Kiwanis, on Sept. 12th, playing at the fair grounds coliseum.

This was an excellent and exceptionally strong show. Very well balanced, very clean and well presented.

Sandra Zoppe arrived a few days early and did a great job in promoting the show, which improved the attendance over previous seasons. All the media, newspapers, radio and TV did features on a number of the acts. Tino Wallenda Zoppe and Susan Richardson of the TV show "Eight Is Enough" had their foot prints placed in cement in the downtown mall.

The line-up, following the National Anthem was:

The Beautiful Olinka, slide for life; Larry Allan Dean, 8 siberian tigers; Zoppe's Animal Fantasia, with Dino and Osca Zoppe, 6 dogs, a chicken, duck and cat all on horseback, really entertained the children; Miss Olinka single trapeze featured upsidedown loop walk, spinning and a descending head stand; Don and Joy Anderson's Texas White Horse Troupe, worked in two rings; Miss Loni and Miss Barbara, foot juggling did a fine job; Don Giovanni's comedy lamp post act brought down the house; Susan Richardson, TV star who worked in the Circus of the Stars, sang her new number "One more Time" from a perch above center ring. She had four aerial ballet girls performing with her; Mario Drougette, balancing lad-

der; Princess Natachia, bareback riding; the Zoppe Family "Comedy Riding Academy" really amused the house.

After intermission: The Flying Carrolls, the very pretty young ladies and a catcher did a very nice flying act; Don and Joy Anderson, high school horses; Tino Wallenda's high wire act assisted by Olinka with a headstand suspended from a bike on the wire, an outstanding act; The Drougette Family, hat juggling and Billy Barton with his very entertaining and dramatic bear-away ending cloud swing Miss Ann Pike, did a fine job of presenting three elephants; The La Mothe Bros. "Pirates of the Sky", finished the show with a most unusual variation of aerial balancing on a ship's anchor.

A very fine show, don't miss it!

P. S. Austin Miles did a great job as ringmaster and Marty Rosen's six piece band, conducted by Mike Pike added a lot to the show program.

PEOPLE

VERNON WERNER and BUCK NOLAN, clowns, worked the State Fair date in Michigan for GRACE McINTOSH's M & M Circus.

DR. SUSAN FREISBURG has two slide lectures prepared for use by librarians, one on Circus People and one Circus History, for details write to: Institute for Intercultural Studies & Research, Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas.

Unsure Future

(From an Associated Press report written by Sanjoy Hazarika early in September).

After thrilling Indian people for over a hundred years, the glitter and glamour of the circus is wearing thin, bringing problems that owners say may force them to fold their tents for good.

"It is only a matter of time before it (the big top) collapses," Raghavan Nair, manager of the Bharat Circus said in a current magazine interview.

Falling profits, lack of government support, high rents, inflation and lagging public interest, are all part of the deteriorating picture faced by Indian circuses, the owners say.

"If the present situation continues, we won't last another 10 years," said P. K. Madan Gopal, owner of the Great Rayman Circus.

India currently has some 300 circuses, big and small, which employ an estimated 48,000 people, the owners say. The circus industry in India ranks fourth in size behind those in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and the United States.

Today, however, many Indian circuses eke out a bare existence.

India's flourishing film industry has siphoned off an uncomfortably large part of the audience that used to depend on the circus for diversion, and television, though still in its infancy here, similarly has attracted its share of the entertainment audience.

Inflation, ever rising costs are a major problem. Few companies can afford insurance and consequently are vulnerable.

The idle months during the annual summer monsoon, when torrential rains make it impossible to travel or stage shows also eat into the profits.

Another threat comes from within the circus itself, where many performers complain of low salaries.

They're Married

JAMES M. COLE and **GURTHA FEELEY** were united in marriage on Sept. 29th, at the Trinity Methodist Church Chapel in De Land, Fla.

The bride was a resident of Penn Yan, N. Y., which was Mr. Cole's hometown, and she operates the William Talley Associates, an interior decorating firm.

Mr. Cole is well-known in the circus business, having operated The Great James M. Cole Circus under canvas for many years, Circusland at Penn Yan and he is currently owner and operator of the James M. Cole All-Star TV Circus. Mr. Cole has been a resident of DeLand, Fla., but the couple will be residing in Penn Yan, N. Y.

From Tampa Bay

by 'Circus Joe' Valenciano

Ron and Joy Holiday were invited to the 1st anniversary party given for TV's "P.M. Magazine," which the Holidays have appeared on twice with their animals during the past year. The St. Petersburg-based couple announced they would debut a new levitation illusion on Sept. 15th in Las Vegas. The party was shown on the regular P. M. Show.

Joe V. Goetz recently purchased an entire miniature village (HO scale) for his circus and model railroad shop. The village includes a newspaper press building, where Joe intends to put a "Circus Report" logo on the front of the building, which will add a nice circusy touch to the village.

Victor, the Rasslin' Bear will make an appearance at Tampa's Eastlake Square Mall Sept. 23-27, with three shows daily.

The Chinese Acrobats appeared at the St. Petersburg's Bayfront Center, Sept. 11-12. They had one show the first day and two on the second day.

"Baby Tarra" the roller skating elephant was seen on the Jerry Lewis MD Telethon, at an L. A. rink along with the young ac-

tresses of "Facts of Life" TV series. Also seen on the Telethon were the Berosini Orangatang.

This writer would like to thank Robert Phebus of Danville, Ill., for the folders and souvenir coloring book of The Chicago Circus Parade. He spent a few weeks on the road with Franzen Bros. Circus and most recently paid visits to Hoxie Bros., and Carson & Barnes Circus. Next month he plans to rejoin Franzen Bros. with his own miniature circus. Bob was in charge of all the horses at the Chicago Parade. Good News! He writes the event will be repeated next year.

Also I want to thank Sebastian Adriani for the posters and bumper stickers for the "Blue Angel." Sebastian is the ringmaster of the Coronas Circus.

BEAUMONT WRITER'S CLUB

by Rev. M. H.

Carmen Hall, of the Halls of Fame Productions, recently terminated a summer engagement in New Hampshire. She will be presenting her monkey act at the Dallas, Texas, Fair, this month, where she will be assisted by a new partner.

ELEPHANTS

from BILL WOTSCH

In the July-Aug. issue of the Elks magazine there was a story titled "The Elephant, People Like Colossus." by Joseph Stocker.

It's an interesting article showing that elephants are like people in that they help one another when in distress, fall in love, comfort the sick and dying and even bury their dead, the author says. In addition they can master some 30 to 40 tricks.

In one paragraph there is mention of the elephant "Tom Thumb" an elephant with the P. T. Barnum Circus. This animal mastered the following routine:

Dressed in a hat, coat and trousers, he would walk on his hind legs to a table set on a small platform. The elephant would take a handbell in his trunk and ring for the waiter and then ordered drinks.

The waiter returned with a bottle and two glasses. When the man wasn't looking the elephant downed the contents of the bottle. After putting away several bottles of

liquid, the elephant picked up a fan and would fan himself.

In the last paragraph, Bill "Buckles" Woodcock is quoted as saying: "Elephants spoil you for anything else - including people."

Miscellaneous

Special Edition - by Aladco, Inc. "All About Town" (a game of travel), Peru. Ind.

This is a game for those aged 8 to adults, which can be ordered through the Peru Chamber of Commerce, Peru. Ind.

PEOPLE

MADELINE FRANKS, wife of Charles Franks, elephant trainer, is recuperating at home after spending several weeks in a hospital. She would enjoy cards and letters and they can be sent to her at: 7019 St. Estaban, Tujunga, Calif. 91042.

In Memoriam

EDWARD McDONALD (83) retired showman and seaman, died of cancer in a Richmond, Calif., hospital on Sept. 17th. During his youth he worked on the Ringling Circus as a teamster and handler. Later, after being injured by a horse he left the circus and then spent many years on ships at sea. A native of New York, he is survived by his wife Joyce, a son and two grand children.

PEOPLE

BOBBY GREENE, who worked the snake show on Hoxie Bros. Circus, has left that show to play fairs and celebrations with his calliope.

TERRY CAVARETTA, triple flying act somersaulter and her sister, both stars at Circus Circus in Las Vegas, visited the big Ringling Red Unit at Anaheim, Calif.

Mailbag

from BUSTER MELZORA

I never knew the first four somersaults was a secret. My father, John Melzer, saw the "Clarkonians" accomplish this feat twice in a practice session.

Miscellaneous

There are 4 ceramic figures of Emmett Kelly, Jr. on the market and a 5th one is soon to be released. They make great collector's items.

Some 6,000 wild horses which roam the western public rangelands will be killed as a means of controlling the herds and to prevent infringement on cattle and sheep grazing lands.

Some 120 live alligators from Belle Glade, Fla., have been air shipped to Israel, where they are to be placed in the Golar Heights area. They'll make their new home on a 10 acre park, with a gator theme.

For 'Popo,' 'Chuckles' and a little seltzer from the past

Popo the Clown died the other day before I could make good on a promise.

Unexpectedly seeing his obituary startled me at first. Then it made me laugh, because all I could think of was that brilliant old "Mary Tyler Moore Show" episode called "Chuckles Bites the Dust."

Originally broadcast in 1975, it is undoubtedly the best known of the series' 168 episodes. Veteran viewers will remember it vividly. Others may have caught it in reruns.

As the story goes, Chuckles the Clown was host of a kiddie show at the TV station where Mary and her buddies work. One day he marched in a parade dressed as Peter Peanut and a rogue elephant tried to shell him.

For the next couple of days in the newsroom bad jokes abound about Chuckles' death. Mary acts annoyed and accuses the others of callousness. Here's some sample dialogue:

Murray: Aw, come on, Mair. We're not laughing at his death. We all liked him and we're sorry.

Sue Ann: Mary, dear, don't the circumstances strike you as being the least bit bizarre?

Lou: After all, the guy died wearing a peanut suit, killed by an elephant.

Murray: Yeah — born in a trunk, died in trunk.

Mary: OK. Forget what he was wearing! Suppose he hadn't been dressed as a peanut. Would it still be funny?

Murray: It could have been worse. He could have gone as Billy Banana and had a gorilla peel him to death.

Mary isn't impressed. The day of Chuckles' funeral she and the gang assemble at the mortuary chapel. Mary is somber, the others struggle to hold back giggles and snickers.

"And what did Chuckles ask in return?" Reverend Burke asks during a straight-aced eulogy.

"Not much. In his own words, 'A little song, a little dance, some seltzer in your pants.'"

Suddenly Mary breaks out laughing. Everyone looks at her and Reverend Burke stops his eulogy.

"Excuse me, young lady," he says. "You feel like laughing, don't you?"

Mary, standing, self-consciously gulps back her laughter and gestures helplessly.

"Don't try to stop yourself. Go ahead, laugh out loud," the minister says. "Don't you see? Nothing could have made Chuckles happier. He lived to make people laugh. He found tears offensive, deeply offensive. He hated to see people cry. Go ahead, my dear — laugh."

With that, of course, Mary begins crying uncontrollably.

I don't know how they buried Popo, but it should have been in full costume with a smile on

RICK MALASPINA



his lips and grease paint on his kisser.

And he should have been laid to rest in a trunk, because that, sort of, is the way Popo came into the world. Like Chuckles.

He always said he'd been abandoned in a shoebox and found by a family who later abandoned him again to a neighbor named De Bathe. He kept the name, bestowing on himself the title of Count De Bathe, and hit the road at age 14.

He hopped a train to San Francisco and found work singing and dancing in "dumps and dives," as he put it. He went overseas with a circus and from then on made clowning his life.

A lifelong bachelor, Popo made Children's Fairyland in Oakland his home base, but for years he traveled the world bringing laughter and good cheer wherever he went — to children, especially, because above all else, Popo loved children.

That's why he phoned me on and off the past couple of years.

Popo wanted to get together and talk about his career, which included appearances in movies and children's TV shows, and his thoughts on how TV for children might be improved. He was of the opinion that the world was in dangerously short supply of clowns.

He also wanted to give me a tour of his house in Oakland, the contents of which, he said, I wouldn't believe. He said it was packed with props, toys, stuffed animals, memorabilia and oddities he'd collected during more than 60 years of clowning.

Popo's story idea appealed to me, and I promised I'd visit him to talk more and see his house. But I kept getting busy, time passed and then so did Popo.

He died of a heart attack at home a few weeks ago. Popo was 81. I never even met him in person. I knew him only by that jaunty, raspy little voice on the phone.

I have absolutely no doubt, though, that he'd want to be remembered the way those "Mary Tyler Moore Show" characters remembered their Chuckles.

Clowns are supposed to make people laugh, even after they die. And Popo was right: We've got far too few clowns these days.

Here's that story I promised, Popo. Sorry it's late. And here's a little seltzer down your pants.

PEOPLE

RON and JOY HOLIDAY opened at the Flamingo Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas on Sep. 15th, where they are featured in the show "City Lites". They're doing their new levitation and introducing their new black panther "Magic".

ANGELA WILNOW and Her Collies finished up the outdoor season by playing at the Lincoln Amusement Park in Fall River, Mass., for the Abe Ford Agency. They will soon head west to play dates for Big John Strong.

MIKE PIKE and his Band are backing up Country Western Artists on the Travel Stage at the Kansas State Fair.

JERRY BOOKER was featured on the front page of "The Country Almanac" circulated in San Mateo County, Calif. The picture and article announced the opening of his "Royal Horse Fair" at the San Mateo Fair.

DIETER WICHERT, wild animal and elephant trainer, writes that he is no longer working with the Cuneo animals and has

moved to Southern California.

URSULA BOTTCHER, polar bear trainer, was featured in a special color "Let's Go" section of the Milwaukee (Wisc) Sentinel on Sept. 4th.

ACTS

Aug. 20-23 - Del Norte County Fair in Calif. Acts were: Hi Fi the Clown (Bob Emerco), Dr. Winslow's Miracle Medicine Show, Southern Scottish Bagpipers and local talent.

Aug. 27-30 - Modoc District Fair in Calif. Acts were: Hi Fi the Clown (Bob Emerico), Ernie Fetch's goats and Boden & Zanetto.

Sept. 19 - Emmett Kelly, Jr., Circus, Mayo Civic Auditorium, Rochester, Minn. Acts were: Ada Smieya, lions and tigers, Chase & Park, trampoline, The Smahas, horses, Fabulous Darnells, dogs/adagio, Brett Shockley, unicycle, Flores Family, cradle, Head trapeze, cloud swing, Nancy Kelly, ringmistress.

Castle Int'l Circus

by Alton L. Jones

The Hubert Castle Int'l Circus has two big days, July 31 and Aug. 1, with two shows each day, at Joplin, Mo. The show was produced by Tarzan Zerbini for the benefit of the Joplin Shrine Club as well as the Carthage and Neosho clubs. It was the 25th Shrine Circus held in Joplin.

Maestro Clement Toca, Mrs. Toca and son Gregory, gave a musical treat to start the show and were most timely with the music for all acts. A bevy of disco-ing Jungle Beauties entertained on the Spanish webs and were followed by the Professors of Phoolishness who provided belly laughs a plenty.

In a space age sensation, three duos and four female performers swayed high in the air and as a special delight there was Sylvia Zerbini, the world's youngest trapeze star at the age of 13. Next was the juggling jamboree with the Kolmedys, from Hungary, Sampion, Belgium's juggling grand master and the Torino Brothers, direct from Italy.

The three rings were filled with Saharan

Camels, and Royal Inca Llamas, Pet Baby Marie, the elephant and Miss Patty Zerbini with her wonder Lipizzan stallion "Baron." This animal was direct from Vienna's Spanish Riding School.

The Ricardo Troupe were excellent on the bounding low wire in one ring, and Alaine, the human fly, direct from France, who walked a steep inclined steel cable while balancing and juggling items on a razor sharp sword.

Horwath's Chimps became a riot of fun and pleasure even putting on a boxing match. Then the three rings were filled by the Olmeda Troupe who presented their Arabian steeds in Spanish Riding. A treat for lovers of classic horsemanship. The Gasperys were entertaining with their acrobatics, one had to pay close attention to see all the antics these fun-makers presented.

Les Blocks, newest high wire sensation, completed the astonishing 3-high on the tightwire without a net. Marie France presented her tiny Dyn-O-Mite Yorkshire Terriers in splendid fashion and Queen of the Air, Mlle. Jacqueline gave a breath-taking half-twist and caught herself in the rigging by her bare heel.

Following intermission, Craig Bonde, a new young animal trainer, handled an arena full of Siamese tigers and put them through their routines in masterful fashion. The Antonios were really wizards on bikes that were unique and most enjoyable.

Interspersed between many of the acts were the clowns, with Toby Ballantine, and Lee Marx, doing most of the funnies.

The Hubert Castle elephants were put thru their paces by Craig Bonde, with some new varieties of action. The Cornari's with their trampoline and Musical Clown act was loudly applauded by the audience.

The final act of the show was Captain Circus, being blasted from the mouth of the cannon, as a projectile, and caught downstream in a net. This is always a pleasure to watch.

The ringmaster chores were handled by Jon Friday in his usual masterful manner. The unit manager was Reggie Armour and well done.

Our long-time friend Bob Dunham, is the Business Manager and did everything possible to make the attendees happy.

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WHALE EXPERT (Continued)

15c perfume created an eye-watering atmosphere.

Nor was that all.

As an added attraction the Pacific Coast Whaling Company displayed a mermaid. Well mummified.

"What it was," Charles Roark says, "was half monkey and half fish. Somehow they managed to get the top of this monkey, his arms and head and everything attached to the bottom of a fish."

There was no extra charge for seeing the mermaid.

That night in the whale's mouth?

"We got to a small town in inland Florida. The deal was we bought tickets in the chair car and for that they let us pull the whale along behind the rest of the train."

Reaching town, the whale car was uncoupled on a sidetrack.

"That night it was too late to get a room without waking somebody up. I just made a pallet with some curtains we had there and slept in the whale's mouth like Jonah."

Special

Mrs. Vaneta (Taylor) Gore is seeking information about her father - Georgia Herbert Taylor - and her grand-parents who were with circuses during the 1910-1920 period.

Mrs. Gore reports that her grandfather was a high wire performer who was killed in a fall during the above time period. Her father passed away when she was just 7 years old. She does not know the names of the circuses that her family was with.

Anyone who can provide any information or help should write to: Mrs. Vaneta (Taylor) Gore, Rte. 3, Box 272, Livingston, Tenn. 38570.

ACTS

Sept. 17-20 - Fair at Tunbridge, Vt. Acts playing the date were: Erik Adams, dogs; The Francarros, foot juggling; Mr. Slim Bacon and L. J. Newton; Erik Adams, chimps; Francarro and Estreleta, aerialists. Acts were booked by Al Martin Agency, Boston, Mass.

IT WAS THE POWER OF LOVE AND CARE OF SO VERY MANY, THAT YOU MY FRIENDS 'DID' PULL ME THROUGH A FOUR WEEK MENTAL CRISIS OF HOSPITALIZATION AND AMPUTATION OF THE LEFT FOOT.

I WAS ABLE TO LEAVE THE HOSPITAL SEPT. 20th AND AM NOW ON THE ROAD TO A SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY.

I'M FOREVER GREATFUL TO EACH OF YOU.

SINCERELY,

TOM O. INABINETTE
1706 Division Street
Greenville, Texas - 75401

Mailbag

from Ray Harris

The issue of Sept. 14th, of C. R., sure did bring back some memories with that ad of the Sells Floto and Buffalo Bill Show.

I saw the show in Pasadena a few days before the L. A. stand. I was up before dawn to watch the unloading, and on the lot when Buffalo Bill drove up with a two seated buggy with a team of white horses.

I was an 11 yr. old boy at the time who wanted to be a showman even then. I must have been back by the pad room when Buffalo Bill drove in and a groom came out to take the team.

I got up enough courage to say "Hello Mr. Buffalo Bill". He stepped down from the carriage and pulled off a glove and shook hands with me, saying "How are you young man." (I'll bet I didn't wash my hand for a week).

It was then I decided I would be a showman and shortly thereafter I got my first job in a silent motion picture theatre as an usher for 25c a night, but it was the start of 50 years in show business, working in all branches of it. Twenty of them were with the big railroad circuses.

From the Office Wagon (Continued)

should show courtesy to the public whenever and wherever possible while in town and on the lot. The show is judged by what just one person does or says, as well as what it looks like on the lot.

An outgoing friendly attitude should come from each show employee. Remember, you and the show are guests of the town in much the same way they are the show's guests while attending the circus. Treat them as you yourself would want to be treated.

(Comments and response to this column should be addressed to: Bradd Frank, P. O. Box 668, Crescent City, Fla. 32012).

Notice

An error was made in the Show Date lists this past week. The Swan Bros. Circus was playing at the Fair in Bakersfield, Calif., and not the Pickle Family Circus as was reported.

Bentley Bros. Circus

by GEORGE C. BINGAMAN

Bentley Bros. Circus packed them in at the Small Stadium of York High School when the show played York, Pa., Aug. 11th. My throat was parched from the three hot humid hours of the afternoon, waiting for the cold cola in popular demand at Tommy's concessions, where long lines were waiting.

With Joseph Nappa (on trumpet) directing a fine six-piece band, the excellent order of displays had great back up for the classy veteran acts of this snazzy three ring thriller.

Rounding out the windjammer ensemble were Brooks Greer (trumpet), Barry Nitikman (trumpet), Mark Kefestian (trombone), Clyde Blankwelder (keyboard) and Dennis Thurman (drums).

From England Allen Gold's two lions and four tigers proved to be an outstanding opener exhibiting roll-overs, jump-overs, sit-ups, audience reaction gimmicks in a fine assortment of well-handled tricks which established this young foreign trainer in the ranks of first class animal showmanship. Gold has young, active, alert and smart cats whose response to his cues are very pleasing to the crowds.

Connoisseurs of sawdust entertainment appreciated Tommy's assemblage of established names for the '81 circuit. Herbie Weber, the Winns, Bucky Steele, Gomez, Rodriguez, Anthony, Martinez, Karoly, Zerbini, To hear their names is to recognize that you'll have a treat in this Bentley show.

Tommy had a bevy of beauties in this show three lovelies on rolling globes, in two rings each at the outset, the Chiletis and Dielkas, a den of striking Dalmatians presented by Evy Karoly, six marvelous black and white liberty horses by Phil, three stunners in a triple-combined hair hang, three Chavier Sisters in a combined iron jaw and others.

The Zerbini's captured my standout award. Roberto and Mario opened as the Lucky Brothers in comedy table tomfoolery, superb acrobatics. They returned in the Nicholas Group presenting titillating teeterboard, featuring a four man high. Their final appearance as the Zerbini family Riding Group is a knockout featuring the unequalled double passing somersaults of Mario and Roberto (forward and backward) on two horses prancing rump-to-head cir-

cling the ring. I have not seen anything like this for forty years!

Tommy Bentley has a top three ring show for all who can catch Bentley Bros. in '81.

The order of displays: Overture; Circus On Parade; In three rings, The Chiletis and Dielkas, rolling globes, center Los Latinos, low wire; Evy Karoly's Canine Revue; The Lucky Brothers; Cradle Juan and Isabella Martinez; The Count of Monte Crisco presented by Evy Karoly; Clowns; The Nicholas Group, teeterboard; Thi Ming Chcu, triple hair hang; Phillip Anthony's liberty horses; Intermission.

Double flying trapeze by the Rodriguez family; Inclined wire, Great Huberto and Roverta Winn; Chair Balancing by the Winn family; Triple iron jaw by the Chavier Sisters; Band number; Zerbini Family riding act; Joanne and Bucky Steele with the circus elephants; Cycle on wire thrills by the Hans Winn Troupe.

Bentley Bros. Circus photo identification:

- 1 - The Dielkas
- 2 - The Zerbini Family Troupe
- 3 - Allen Gold's cats
- 4 - Evy Karoly and Counte of Monte Crisco
- 5 - Roberto and Mario Zerbini doing the double passing somersault
- 6 - Thi Ming Chou - Gomez Sisters in triple hair hang
- 7 - The Flying Rodriguez Family - Double wide flying trapeze
- 8 - The Chavier Sisters - iron jaw
- 9 - Roberto and Mario Zerbini

PEOPLE

PERRY JOHNSON and wife recently visited with CR editor DON MARCKS. Perry is musical director for the "Old Time Vaudeville" shows which are produced by SID KELLNER.

DON and BETTY STRONG, trick ropers and bull whip artists, who had been on Circus Vargas, are presently off the road and managing an R. V. Park in Beaumont, Calif.

EMMETT and NANCY KELLY have been visiting relatives in the mid-west states. They plan to return to their home in Tombstone, Ariz., this month.





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PEOPLE

CARLOS FARFAN visited his brother ARMONDO and the Flying Farfan Family when Ringling Red played Long Beach, Calif.

FATHER DAVID HENNESSEY, circus priest, is traveling with the Ringling Red Unit this season. He plans to tour with the Blue next year.

CAROL BUCKLEY and "Baby Tarra" just spent the summer filming "Annie" and also working with the Big Apple Circus in New York. Prior to that they played a date in Las Vegas for LEONARD GREEN and were at a Colorado Park, thanks to TED HILL of Theodore Productions.