

CIRCUUS REPORT



AMERICA'S
FAVORITE CIRCUS WEEKLY

9th Year

Number 40

October 6, 1980



Joseph C. Reisinger

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from
Don
Marcks

There are a lot of pros and cons about the use of animals in a circus performance and much of the recent comment has come about because of publicity of the Hassani Circus in England. That show carries no animals at all and in fact has been funded by the SPCA in hopes the idea will catch on with other circuses.

There are those who say it makes them ill to watch animals performing, doing what they call "non-natural" acts. On the other hand it is easy to find people who will tell you the circus is doomed to die, if they do not have animal acts, and that a circus is animal acts. Therefore, it is interesting to read Gordon Carver's report on the Sells Floto Circus of 1922, which appears in the CHS "Bandwagon" magazine for July-Aug. 1980.

Carver writes:

"... it was a show that was almost entirely oriented to human performers. Except for the elephants, there were no trained animals as such. There were no trained seals, liberty horses, bears or other animals that so regularly associated with circuses. Nor were there any wild animal acts. Of course, there was a good deal of horse flesh in the various equestrian acts, posing numbers, races, and wild west. It was a most unusual show. But it did seem to be popular with the audiences."

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ACTS - Are you listed with us ?



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CR Salutes

DOUG ASHTON, who has been a feature on the American Continental Circus this year, where he presented his slapstick comedy antics in the center ring, much to the delight of audiences everywhere. For the finale of his act, Doug is joined by the pretty Sally, and together they present a musical feature that brings the audience to their feet.

PEOPLE

RALPH McINTOSH heads the "Magic With A Message" show that plays churches on the west coast.

FRANK DEAN, western rope spinner and author, was featured in a special review story appearing in the Aug. 2nd edition of the Cincinnati (Ohio) Enquirer.

BOB STODDARD reports that Circus Day & Clown Day at the Fair, held at the Texas State Fair was a big success.

ROBERT and ELAINE LUND have been awarded a certificate of commendation by the American Association for State and Local History "for creating a scholarly and entertaining" American Museum of Magic in Marshall, Michigan.

TARZAN ZERBINI and his wild animals were featured on TV's "Those Amazing Animals" early this month.

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Show Dates

Carden-Johnson Circus
Oct. 9-12 Corpus Christi,
Texas

Carson & Barnes Circus
Oct. 6 Greenville, Ill.
7 Shelbyville
8 Essingham
9 Godfrey
10 Valley Park, Mo.
11 Festus
12 Ironton

Great American Circus
Oct. 6 Waycross, Ga.
7 St. Marys

Happytime Circus
Oct. 7-12 Tulare, Calif.

Hoxie Bros. Circus
Oct. 6 Greenwood, Miss.
7 Indianola
8 Tallulah, La.
9 Kosciusko, Miss.
10 Brookhaven
11 Hammond
12 New Iberia, La.

Ringling-Barnum - Blue
to Oct. 12 Denver, Colo.

Ringling-Barnum - Red
Oct. 7-12 Detroit, Mich.

Royal Lichtenstein Circus
Oct. 6 Kansas City, Mo.
7 Manhattan, Kans.
8 Ottawa
9 Edwardsville, Ill.
10 St. Louis, Mo.

Royal Palace Circus
Oct. 7-10 New Orleans, La.

Texas Shrine Circus
Oct. 9-19 Houston, Texas

---- MAGIC ----

It's Magic Show
Oct. 10-26 Los Ang., Calif.

Tom Ogden
Oct. 7 Queens, NY
10 Atlantic City, NJ

Tannen's Jubilee
Oct. 10-12 Loch Sheldrake
NY

---- OTHER DATES ----

Century 21 Shows
Oct. 6-11 Meridian, Miss.

James H. Drew Exposition
Oct. 6-11 Monroe, Ga.

The Gutis Family
to Oct. 19 Dallas, Texas

Hall & Christ Attractions
to Oct. 19 Dallas, Texas
Oct. 8-12 Angleton

Los Latinos
Oct. 9-19 Houston, Texas

Mighty Thomas Shows
Oct. 8-12 Round Rock,
Texas

N.O.T.R. Roping Contest
Oct. 10-13 Las Vegas, Nev.

Peking Opera
Oct. 7-9 Louisville, Ky.
10-12 Minneapolis,
Minn.

Royal American Shows
to Oct. 12 Jackson, Miss.

Mr. Sensation
Oct. 9-19 Houston, Texas

The Sikorskys
Oct. 9-13 Halifax, N.S.

IN MEMORY

OF OUR BELOVED WIFE AND MOTHER

BARBARA

WHO LEFT US ON SEPTEMBER 2nd
FOR A BETTER PLACE IN HEAVEN

*

Since we first met in 1936 on the
Al G. Barnes Circus a lot of leaves
have blown down Memory Lane, and
I am a very lucky man to have walk-
ed that way with you.

OUR ETERNAL LOVE

Sons, George III and Gregory Lee,
and Husband of 40 years, George
"Red" White.

REPORT

HOXIE BROS. CIRCUS

BY SALLY PAYNE

As this fine show nears the end of the season and the circus folks are thinking about "heading for the barn," the performance at Elizabethtown, Ky., Aug. 12th, was well paced, just as fresh and new and entertaining, as if it was the opening performance.

Even though we know at this time of year, everyone must be quite tired, those people out front would never have guessed it.

Elizabethtown, Ky (E'Town for short) is 45 miles south of Louisville, the weather was warm, but not hot, clear skies, dry flat lot, with grass and gently flapping canvas, a perfect circus day, which brought out a nice turn out under the E'Town Shrine auspices, at the fairgrounds. The 4 p.m. matinee was a good ¾ house, the 8 p.m. show was a big straw house. The night show was held up for 15 minutes until they could get them all inside.

After two blowdowns this season, the present top is a two poler. The large round ends and large middle piece is an old Clyde Beatty top, obtained from the Beatty-Cole quarters, uses two roles of quarter poles and one ring.

Mel and B. K. Silverlake have the concessions and Mel has his Big Snake Pit Show booked on. Billy Griffin was at the front door. Lee Maloney is the band leader and Al Gouge plays trumpet. Two 2'x4' baffle boxes on each side of the band stand amplified all that good music for two instruments nicely. Larry Rich did the announcing in clown wardrobe, which came over clear and

Can Place

ACT that can do 2 spots - Preferably animal type acts - Mid-November to Xmas - Eastern U. S. - All high school auditoriums.

ALAN HILL

P. O. Box 4425 Harrisburg, Pa. - 17111

concise.

John Lewis had the performance running smoothly. Jim Waynick, is supt. of the electrical dept.

In the 10 minute intermission the confections were sold off the ring curb, front side, which made for more volume of sales in less time than butchering in the seats, the response was terrific, they had to replenish stock to accommodate sales, in that 10 minutes.

Lee Maloney had the program, which has a story of Hoxie Tucker's start in show business.

Show tears down at night, they sleep on the lot and move the next morning. Frankfort, Ky., was a 90 mile jump from E'Town, where business was reported not as good as E'Town. Visitors from Louisville catching the show at Frankfort (Aug. 13) were Bob Timmel and Jim Clines.

Visitors from Louisville at E'Town were Bill Rhodes, Bill Lortz, Henry and Sally Payne, The courtesy and friendliness on this show is heart warming, visitors are made to feel at home.

The program at E'Town ran 1½ hours and included: Opening Spec; Les Dubois, Sonya and Elizabeth Campa, juggling; Miss Lee Ann single trapeze/neck swivel and spins; Eliza-

(Continued on Page 24)

REPORT**RINGLING IN SEATTLE**

BY BETTY BARTHOLOMEW

Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus Blue Unit (110th edition) opened in Seattle, Sep. 16th and drew a fairly substantial crowd for the first performance.

Seattle crowds just don't seem to get performance minded early in the evening, so people were still drifting in throughout the opening spec, which featured show business mitey mite Michu as official greeter. Harold Ronk was the genial ringmaster.

Starting in the grand manner, first center ring act was Ursula Bottcher and her almost unbelievable polar bears. An outstanding act, the audience almost holds its collective breath as the diminutive Miss Bottcher allows a huge 12 ft. bear to take a tidbit from between her teeth.

From Bulgaria and the Soviet Union respectively, Netko and Lubov Yanchovi show how a combination of ballet and gymnastics can really make a magnificent aerial act. With a whoop and a holler the show picked up pace with the appearance of the three Equestrian

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acts, the Dimitrovi, Ivanovi and Donevi, building human pyramids atop fast moving steeds and performing spectacular somersaults from front to rear horses. This was followed by an abundance of clowns with a wide variety of stunts.

One of the first things to come to mind when circus is mentioned is the flying trapeze act. Ringling presents two very polished acts this season. Transferring from the Red Unit were the Flying Segreras and appearing in place of the tragedy struck Farias were the Padillas from Mexico. Rosita Segrera was a faultless picture of style and grace as she led off the act, followed by Miguel Caceres smooth 3½ to the hands of the catcher. Cather and head of the troupe, Jesus Segrera has every right to be proud of his beautifully coordinated performers, including his 8 year old nephew Tito Montoya. The Padillas are new to Ringling this year but definitely of the class usually presented by the Greatest Show on Earth, with Tulio performing a perfectly executed triple.

Though I have seen them perform every other year since 1968, the King Charles Troupe seems to get consistently better, even though many of their stunts are anticipated, they never cease to amaze.

Three perch acts were presented, from Bulgaria the Georgiev and the Polonia, and Korin, both from Poland. Each spectacular in its own right.

Appearing for the first time in America and warmly received by the Seattle audience were the Remarkable Richters and their talented elephants. When one of the elephants sent a performer flying off a teeterboard to somersault through the air and land on the back of a fellow elephant you thought you had seen it all until the stunt was performed again to a three man high.

Gifted gymnasts galore was such a fast moving whirling, flipping act, it was almost over before it was begun and really left the audience wishing for more. Clowns again filled the arena with their own bumbling, tumbling act.

(Continued on Page 26)



The Weller Family

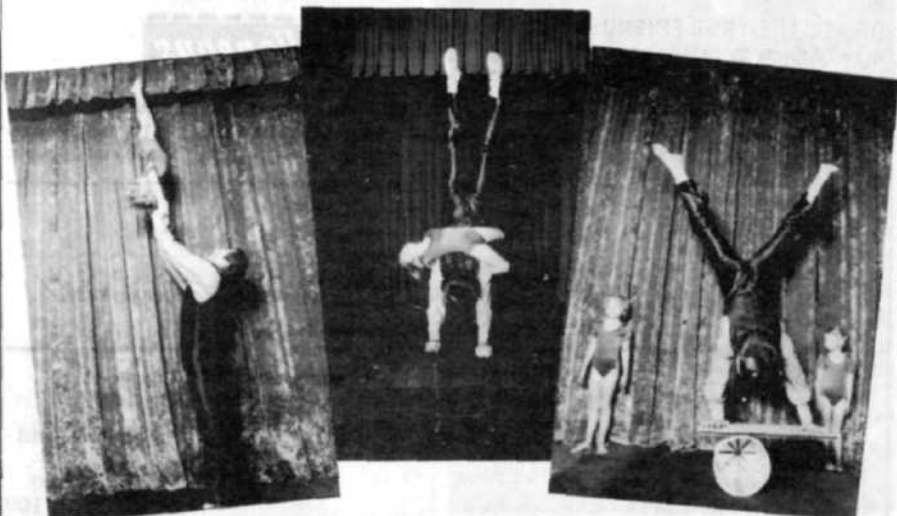
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 1967 - Apr. 18 - Ken Jensen - H. S. Gym
 1968 - None
 1969 - Apr. 4 - Reppines Int. - Fairgrounds
 1970 - Apr. 10 - Reppines Int. - Fairgrounds
 1971 - Apr. 7 - Reppines Int. - Fairgrounds
 1972 - Apr. 12 - Reid Bros. - H. S. Gym
 1973 - Apr. 11 - Reid Bros. - H. S. Gym
 1974 - Apr. 25 - Grand Circus - H. S. Gym
 1975 - May 14 - Grand Circus - H. S. Gym
 1976 - May 20 - Grand Circus - H. S. Gym
 1977 - May 11 - Grand Circus - H. S. Gym
 1978 - May 10 - Grand Circus - H. S. Gym
 1979 - Apr. 18 - Grand Circus - H. S. Gym

CIRCUS QUIPS . . .

BY KARL J. BISCHOFF

SHOW BUSINESS is changing so fast these days days that you couldn't stay wrong even if you tried.

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE between sight and vision . . . a lot of acts are a vision to see . . . some are a sight.

OVERHEARD . . . that the average showman can't stand prosperity, but there is news for them . . . the average showman doesn't have to.

OF ALL THE TRUE FRIENDS you have in show business there is someone who always remembers your birthday but never your age.

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REPORT

CFA/CMB BANQUET

The Third Annual Banquet sponsored jointly by the Rudynoff Tent 127 of the CFA and the Rudynoff Ring 60 of the CMB will be held at the Reese Volunteer Fire Hall near Westminster, Maryland, on Saturday, Oct. 11th.

A family-style dinner including roast beef, fried chicken, and all the trimmings will be served promptly at 7 p.m. The featured speaker will be Frank Ball, "The Circus Fan's Circus Fan". In addition movies, displays, door prizes and other surprises will await you.

Tickets are \$8.00 for adults and \$6.00 for children twelve and under. For reservations please contact Jane Amereihn, 2301½ Foster Ave., Parkville, MD 21234 - Phone: (301) - 668 - 3582.

Reese Hall is located three miles south of Westminster, Md., on U. S. Route 140. The doors will open at 6 p.m. on Oct. 11th.

Miscellaneous

Leonard's Learning Circus, a puppet show designed to encourage children to read, has been playing shopping malls in the southern states.



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REPORT**LALLA ROOKH GROTTO CIRCUS**

BY BILL GALLOWAY

The annual Lalla Rookh Grotto Circus (rochester, NY) was again produced by George Hubler. Three performances were presented on Sept. 6th - at 1 p.m., 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Dome Arena in Henrietta, NY.

This year, sixty Grotto and amateur clowns performed during the shows. Visitors included Harold Rupp, Bev Galloway, Bruce Galloway, Saralee and Bubba Hastings, Jr., and Circus Historical Society vice president, Dick Flint.

The show featured: Overture, Introductions and National Anthem; Spec with all performers; Susan Sherrell's Royal Afghans (Zoppe); Clowns with "Boys and Girls"; Senor Magana, (Pancho) whips; Stoney the elephant, trained and presented by Sally and Mike La Torres; Clowns and the Firecracker; Johnny Laddie & Co. (Zoppe), unsupported ladders; Miss Lou Ann Jacobs, aerial contortion and single trapeze; Grotto Clowns with "Tug-O-War"; Zoppe's Rhesus Monkey Revue (Davide

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and Susan Zoppe); Harry Thomas and his tigers.

The show's staff included: George Hubler, producer and announcer; Tex and Marcie Maynard, drums and organ; Wayne Liikala, producing clown, and Terry and Camille O'Brien, concessions.

MAIL

The Post Office has returned Circus Reports mailed out to the following people, stating it was unable to deliver them as addressed.

Pat Hyman
Irene Sharpe

Joseph Lee
Ray McMahon

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ACTS

CHUCK BURNES, Manager of Special Events at Knott's Berry Farm, has booked the following acts into the park's Good Time Theatre for a four day run opening Thanksgiving Day, November 27th. Three shows will be presented each day.

Acts include: Emmett Kelly, Jr.; The Ferges Troupe, trampoline; The Saxons, unicycle and juggling duo; Zpielzeug Duo, hand balancing/one finger stand; The Shurays, double trapeze; Mike Whitney, ringmaster/vocalist, and Don Beamsley Trio, organ/drums/trumpet.

SHOWS IMPROVEMENT

A Las Vegas hospital spokesman reports that Gary Wells, motorcycle daredevil, "is now listed as serious, but much improved."

The 23 year old cyclist suffered multiple injuries while trying to jump over the fountain at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas on Sept. 15th. Both his legs were broken, his pelvis was fractured and a major blood vessel in his heart was torn. He will have to undergo surgery to repair his broken bones.

Winter Address

JIM PARKER

Harvelle's MBL Haven
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in the NEWS

AN EXPENSIVE GOOSE

Four workers at the Columbus, Ohio, Zoo who just followed directions have shelled out \$300 to replace an Australian goose they fed to cheetahs.

The unscheduled feeding came after workers asked a supervisor what they should do to keep the goose from pecking at people.

The supervisor's reply was "feed it to the cheetahs." and so workmen did just that.

Zoo director Jack Hanna says "it wasn't meant to be malicious. He didn't mean it, but they took him literally. He tried to stop the, but it was too late."



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PEOPLE

ZELLA LEHR, popular country-western vocalist, was once a juggler and unicyclist with her parents circus act.

GENE McLAUGHLIN did the trick roping for the film "Urban Cowboy", while J' W. STOKER did the roping for "Bronco Billy" and HAMILTON FLOYD handled the rope tricks in "Battle Creek Brawl."

DENNIS PHELPS (Ho Ho the Clown) worked three one hour magic shows on a mobile trailer stage for the Burlington Northern Railway Corp. on Sept. 12-13 for the "Railroad Days Celebration" in St. Cloud, Minn. Audience of children and adults were seated under canvas luckily as it was misting most of the day.

SYLVESTER and BARBARA BRAUN, western performers touring with the Happytime Circus, spent a few days at home resting before opening at the Ventura (Calif) Fair.

TOM UPTON, circus photographer, visited the Ringling-Barnum Blue show at Fresno, Calif., where he also caught the local fair.

W. E. (Shotgun) PAGE visited the Roberts Bros. Circus at Auburn, Ky., on Sept. 19th and reports he enjoyed visiting his friends.

PHILIP MORRIS, magician, served as technical advisor for the CBS-TV Soap Opera

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"Search For Tomorrow", among the many things he did for the show was to create a life-sized skeleton hand that was used in the filming.

JOE McKENNON, circus author, has just published a new book called "Circus Lingo" and he is currently on a tour of twelve states to promote his book.

ENRICO WALLEDA will be featured in a "Skywalk" at San Juan, P. R., on Oct. 8th. The event is being filmed for part of ABC-TV "Daredevils" show.

DENNIS PHILLIPS and PHILIP MORRIS have just released a new book on special effects for haunted houses.

THE FLYING ESPANAS will have two acts working on Circus Vargas for the 1981 season.

THE FLYING LARRAYS, currently working on Circus Vargas will be touring with the Hamid-Morton Circus in 1981.

REPORT**BENTLEY BROS. CIRCUS**

BY JIM PARKER

After a short break from their successful Spring tour, Tommy Bentley and Chuck Clancey immediately lined up a strong show for their fall tour. Between the two tours Tommy and Chuck, along with their promotion crew were extremely busy working their eastern towns as it is no easy task to ensure success in cities no matter how strong your sponsor is. The spring tour covers the west coast and the fall tour covers the eastern/mid west cities and this year several new cities were picked up so there was no idle time for the management of Bentley Bros. Circus.

Kinkers on the fall tour included Hans, Roverta and Karl Winn (motorcycle on high wire); Hans and Adele Klose (gorilla parody and sword balance); Rudolph Delmonte (contortion); Don and Jo Ann Anderson (dressage and liberty horses); Frank, Doris, Frank, Jr. and Dieter Galambos (cradle and rolling globe plus Frank was supt.); Jo-Ann Jennier (Aerialta, single traps) assisted by Rocky; Ben, Linda and Shawn DeWayne with the Paul Kaye elephants; the Napoleone Zamperla Family (Napoleone, Ernestina, Atos, Janie, Ermes and Francisca with their riding act, Doberman dogs and dressage); the Manuel Ramos Family (Manuel, Arturo, Andres, Lancelot, Juanna, Alicia and Cesar Medina with

their mixed big cats, flying trapeze, risley, loop the loop, hand balancing); The Young Troupe (Nicholas, Jr., Linda, Joseph, Leonard, Steve, Jeffrey Bean and Betty Jo Howard with juggling on teeterboard); and the James Zoppe Troupe with James, John Gueren, Lisa Hummel and Andrea Kane with their riding act, replacing the Zamperla family as they left to fill other commitments. Music was provided by Steve Stephani at the organ and Paul Crilis at the drums. Announcing was handled by Tommy Bentley.

Clown Alley consisted of Dion Aumaier, Beverly Hogan Aumaier, John McKay, Jim Parker and Bruce Warner. Chuck Clancy headed up the concessions and Jim Parker doubled as secretary. Lorenzo Alcazar and Rick McAfee, were on concessions and props, respectively.

The special Philadelphia date (Civic Center) included the addition of performer Billy Barton to the show's cast.

Generally speaking business was up from last year, but then so was expenses. Only one city was below expectations and one date was a complete dud, but the remaining tour was up considerably; however, as Tommy Bentley so ably put it (he is never at a loss for words you know) "We shovel it in with one hand, and shovel it out with the other."

Three of our new towns/sponsors were very well pleased at the show as it was a strong

(Continued on Page 30)



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REPORT

JOSE COLE'S CIRCUS

BY FRED A FIZZGIG

The Jose Cole Circus played six towns in Minnesota, Sept. 4-14, sponsored by various service clubs and building superintendents.

Acts appearing with the circus were: Roy Pratt, MC/magic; Satin Doll (Carol Wainwright) trapeze; Dick Cole, dog act with donkey; Smiley Daley, comedy bicycle; Pat Davison, juggling; Benny Williams, with Anna May with a leopard; Dick Cole, mixed animals; Mare-Dan two girls on high wire; Dick Cole, pick-out dog act; The Patricks, rola bola; the Wainwrights, trampoline; Princess Tanya, gorilla fantasy; Benny Williams with three elephants; Clowns were: Smiley (John) Daley and Jeff Cole. Props were handled by Arturo, John and Chico.

Visitors at various locations were Ms. and Gordon Smith, who is still actively training dogs for performers in the business, and Gil Gerard (Buck Rogers) and wife Connie Sellica were seen practicing with Benny Williams and Anna May for the upcoming TV show "Circus of the Stars."



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MAILBAG

FROM RAY HARRIS

Little did I think Fifty years ago, July 20, 1930, I would appear on the cover of your magazine, but I did on the Sept. 22nd issue with the picture of the Barnes wreck of that date. I am the second person on the right, with my foot on the rail of the flat.

I was a stilt walker and clown with the show from 1926 through 1936; later going to the Hagenbeck show and Ringling show. I have long since been retired.

I have a set of pictures of that wreck and one of the men who was crushed under one of the wagons, a prop boy I think, asked me "lift me up", which I did and he died in my arms. An event I will never forget.

In Memoriam 

G. C. (Doc) CROWLEY passed away Sept. 20th at El Cajon, Calif., with the funeral held at Gardena, Calif., on Sept. 25th. He owned the largest motorized carnival in the middle west in the 1930's, originating from his home town of Richmond, Mo. Survivors include his wife Ruby and a daughter Georjeanna.

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in the **NEWS**

COCO'S DREAM COMES TRUE

(Reprinted from an English newspaper, dated Aug. 3, 1980 - the clipping was provided by Jack Bennett).

Some of the more old-fashioned among us might consider the concept of a circus with no animals on a par with a pub with no beer. But not so the RSPCA.

They are delighted that the Circus Hassani - the first of its kind in this country - has sent Nellie the elephant packing, along with her plethora of fire-leaping, head-swallowing, pirouetting and tea-swilling mates. The circus run by Tamara Hassani, daughter of the late, great clown Coco, and her Moroccan-born husband Ali, is instead a feast of "human talent and skills."

There is not a large canine tooth or claw in sight - apart, it is said, from those currently being unsheathed by a few less-than-enthusiastic rivals in the business; and the 30 entertainers who slap on their greasepaint nightly and pour themselves into spangled tights and

leotards provide the entire substance of a dozen acts.

The show lasts for two hours; there are acrobats and tumblers, in which art Tamara used to excel "in my heyday and before I fell from the top of a four-man high pyramid and dislocated my knee; I haven't worked since," says the 51 year old blonde; and there is a trick cyclist, an escapologist, plus illusionist and clowns and trapeze artists.

Not only have the RSPCA, a longtime campaigner against the use of animals in the ring, given the circus their (strictly non-performing) seal of approval by urging people to go and see the show or to support it financially even if they cannot visit it. But they themselves have started the ball rolling with an almost \$10,000 grant.

Although an animal-free circus was one of the dreams of her father Coco - real name Nicolai Polakov - Tamara is more than a little cagey when it comes to talking about the principles behind the venture.

She has worked in circuses where animals are put through their paces - Billy Smart's for instance.

The Hassanis first met while working there together and David Smart is her brother-in-law. "Let's just say I have nothing against animals performing in the ring. But our family have always done specialty acts and have never needed to rely on any talents other than our own. Now I think it's time we artists were given a crack of the whip."

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HOXIE BROS. (Continued)

beth Campas, low wire/slack wire and unsupported ladder on wire; Mr. Fred (Ramon and Tamara Espana) Bizarre Baggage; Color Book Pitch; Clown turn with Larry Rich, Carlos and Juan Campa and Rick Parrott; Lisner Duo (Charles and Dana Armstrong) hanging perch and perch pole; Clown turn at front ring curb "The Washer Women"; The Campa Sisters and Juan Carlos, unicycling; Regalito & Co., the Campa Family in musical comedy; Clown boxing number; Miss Danuska (Dana Anderson) swinging head stand on trapeze and juggling rings; Balloon Pitch; Ramon Espana, rola bola, on top of five cylinders, alternating with horizontal and vertical ones; Aerial Ballet with three girls on web, featuring Freddie White on Roman rings; Hoxie Bros. Mighty Mites, 5 large baby elephants, put thru their paces by Chuck Armstrong.

REPORT

EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

Minnesota Alley 19, Clowns of America, held its 2nd Annual Educational Seminar, Sept. 27 at the Lost Spur Country Club, Mendota, Minn. The schedule of events included: White face make-up, Nancy McGee; Auguste make-up, Dennis Phelps; Tramp make-up, Bob Stanek; Costumes, Betty Cash; Eye wear for clowns, Paul Griffin; Props, Richard Mero; Circus Stunts, Ed Mitzler; Magic, Lorane Abramson; Juggling, Bruce Stone; Balloon sculpture, Walter Boelter; Wrap-up, questions and answer period.

Officers presented were: Bob Achterling, president; Ruth Erkkila, 1st vice president; Nancy McGee, 2nd vice president; Donella Hoffman, treasurer; Pat Roeser, secretary; Lorane Abramson, membership coordinator and Paul Griffin, COA state representative.

RINGLING/BLUE (Continued)

Another first American appearance was presented with the fearless performance of the Grantcharovi (father, mother, son) at the top of the arena. Although it was hard to imagine the strain there must have been on the father as he carried the weight of his wife, who in turn supported her son through various maneuvers, it was all made to look so effortless. The crowd almost came to its feet at the finale when father, with son on his shoulders stood on a bar then dove forward and made a complete circle to once again stand on the bar to a thunderous round of applause.

Then came the spec and one of the most spectacular aerial acts yet presented. Johnny Zoppe, Jr. and his wife Betty, descended from fire streaming rockets to ropes suspended beneath to perform some dazzling aerobatics while son Mario operated the ground controls. Just when you thoroughly felt they'd done everything, they came up with another trick to delight the eye.

The second half opened with another first, Karoly Donnert and his tigers. A well presented act which after a clown interlude resumed with his amazing horseback-riding tigers, with the tigers mounting and dismounting while the horses were in motion.

Then it was the horses again with the Slavovi, Richters and Romanovi, again with pyramids and hurtling from horse to horse (some of the tricks as in the previous equestrian act but still unique in its own way).

Always a favorite with the American audience is the teeterboard act. Filling the three rings were the Wozniak and Kehaiovi, both with a 5-man high, and the Oblocki with a 6-man high. However, the trick that almost brought about a standing ovation was the young performer in the Oblocki who performed a somersault off the teeterboard while wearing stilts.

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The very colorful Elephant Calypso number was presented by the Gautier family. It was fast paced and ended with the crowd pleasing long-mount and headstand and bow by a single elephant.

If ever a showman appears to thoroughly enjoy his work it is that mischevious Michu. After appearing earlier as an organ grinder with a giant monkey he now presents his version of the indominatble superman. It was hard to tell who had more fun - Michu or his audience

There is nothing more awe inspiring than a well performed high wire act and the Guerberos are certainly one of the best. Werner's headstand and rope jumping were outstanding as were his and Jeannie's leaps to the wire over each other's backs. Father Arturo was sufficiently recovered from a recent illness to allow the act to perform their pyramid with Jeannie in the chair. But it is Jeannie's walk across the wire with Werner atop her shoulders that has the crowd yelling its approval and clapping its heart out. Add to this lovely young lady's talents the fact that she designs and makes all the dazzling costumes for the troupe.

Last single act was the amazing motorcycle maneuvers of Victor Urias and Douglas Mac Valley in the Globe of Death. Although a short performance it was well chosen for the finale.

REPORT

CIRCUS VARGAS

BY KEN HOLEHOUSE

Circus Vargas, the show that bills itself as "America's Big Top Giant," rolled its giant caravan of trucks and trailers into Chicago this past month, playing shopping center locations throughout the suburbs. We caught the show in Tinley Park and in Homewood and were astounded at the colossal extravaganza Clifford Vargas has put under his 90,000 square feet big top. The show is a glittering spectacle of superstar circus acts from all over the world and it appears that no expense is spared mounting this 2½ hour celebration of circus.

After seeing Circus Vargas promos which popped up everywhere on Chicago TV for weeks and after seeing paper touting the show pasted all over the Chicago area, we were expecting the best. We weren't disappointed.

Before the performance, the clowns were pitching coloring books and the photo-filled programs. We had the pleasure of talking with Dale Longmire who is producing clown of Vargas' talented and funny clown alley. Though many of the gags are standard - the tooth pull, long shirt, chase, etc. - the routines are fresh and well executed in these capable hands. We also chatted with Billy McCabe, a charming merry-maker whose clowning has spanned decades, continents and a variety of circuses.

As Joe Pon's sonorous baritone announced the opening of the show we sat back with the capacity crowd and eagerly anticipated the show that Joe told us would be in the tradition of the old-time circus. The brightly lit opening spec brought all the performers and animals into the tent for a colorful, bespangled tour around the track. When one sees the track and all three rings filled with animals, and people, one is again impressed with the bigness of this show.

The exciting parade is quickly replaced by the Knops center ring perch pole act, a performance displaying an extraordinary blend of strength and balance. Their capable act concludes with a free standing double perch toping out at 40 feet to the top of the tent. The next display opened all three rings to three fast paced, hard working juggling acts featuring the Osmani Sisters whose dexterity was highlighted by strobe lights and the Dia-

bolo Trio and the Zunigas.

Two rings of white samoyeds were then put through their paces by Jan and Aly. A breathtaking trapeze ensemble with Miss Najean over ring one and Miss Krystyna over ring three followed. The Franconi Duo simultaneously do some rather muscular acrobatics in a beautiful trapeze display over the center ring.

Three rings of liberty horses come charging into the big top, put through their paces by the elegant Henri Wagneur. Henri puts his charges through a variety of maneuvers at a fairly slow, controlled pacing. The bucking 'Capriole' is featured next followed by the mythical horse Pegasus flying out of the mist of the smoke filled center ring. Pegasus, the flying horse, adorned with wings and a bucking spirit, is played by the white stallion General Vargas.

The program reads "The Wallenda legend lives on" and indeed it does in the act featuring the grand-daughter of Karl. Balancing on a chair, balanced on a thin pole supported on the shoulders of the other two members of the Zaltanas troupe who are riding bicycles across the high wire 40 ft. from the pavement, Delilah Wallenda Troffer does a thrilling and heart stopping performance as she slowly stands up on the delicately balanced chair.

After a clown routine got our stopped hearts beating again, we were treated to the Ventura and the Armon Duo and The Kneisleys - again high above the three rings of Circus Vargas. To finish the first half of the show, the amazing Carlos Twins, whose contortions and acrobatics and gifted sense of dance blended together in a marvelously original act. We were amazed by the strength of these petite ladies and their long set featured unbelievable feat after another.

After intermission the Flying Espanas and the Flying Larrays finish their superb aerial acrobatics by each doing the triple somersault.

Wayne Ragen then presents a cage full of lions and tigers who obey him without question. He kisses all the lions on the lips and shakes hands (paws) and hugs most of them, but doesn't share his romantic moments with his tigers. His quiet, studied control over his charges is beautiful to behold and in the tradition of some of the finest animal training we've ever seen.

After an interlude with the gorgeous Varget-

(Continued on Page 29)

in the NEWS

FAMED ELEPHANT DIES

A bull elephant given to the Knoxville, Tenn. Zoo in 1936 by Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, died recently of unknown causes.

Ole Diamond, said to be the largest African bull elephant in captivity, sired the first elephant to be born in the western hemisphere.

A zoo official says the 31 year old animal was eating and drinking well when keepers checked him the day before he died. The next morning when the gates were opened they found him on his knees and shortly afterwards he was pronounced dead.

In 1975, experts who examined Ole Diamond said he was suffering from a kidney ailment and had only two or three years to live. But two years later, after several miscues, he sired the first of two calves and officials dismissed the earlier diagnosis.

Ole Diamond became the impetus for the zoo expansion program when he was given to the city by the circus.

At one time he demolished his enclosure and ripped out its plumbing. The city tried to give him away but there were no takers. They even talked of having him killed, but the Knoxville Journal launched a drive that raised \$22,000 to build him a new and stronger home.

Acts

Among the variety acts booked by Chuck Burnes, Special Events Manager at Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, Calif., during the summer were:

Steppin' Stones, novelty tap; Jerry Layne & Friends, ventriloquist; Mark Kalin & Linda, illusions; Norm Nielsen, illusions; Gene Bell, tap; Glenn Falkenstein, mentalist; The Willettys, juggling/one finger stand; Frances Willard, Spirit Cabinet; The Ferges Troupe, trampoline; Stan Allen, magic comedy; Nick Lucas, vocalist; The Magic Company, illusions; Scotty Plummer, banjo; The Saxons, unicycle/juggling duo; Les Arnold & Co., illusions and Jose Gonzales Gonzale s, novelty act.

They appeared in the Wednesday "Variety On Stage" shows in the Good Time Theatre. Some of the acts were booked through the Walter Trask Agency of Los Angeles.

CIRCUS VARGAS (Continued)

tes on the web, the stallions return for a dressage display with Tina Risdon, Darlene Williams and Alysoun Seacat. Miss Kathy follows with a display of trick riding in the Cossack tradition.

Cloud swingers Miss Irene and Le Gran Robber made our hearts step again with their daring leg catches and plunges to the pavement. Risley was wwell handled by the Anastasini brothers whose double somersault was beyond belief and rola bola was in the good hands of the Hugos and the Gonzalves.

Eleven elephants closed the show in a lively smooth running three ring display directed by Rex Williams. Rex was joined in the production by his wife Eva and the Vargettes.

One final note, the band is brassy and loud, playing a variety of trendy popular tunes well suited to the acts. The lighting is some of the best we've seen in a circus tent; the sound is clear and the volume is just right.

Circus Vargas has had some serious problems in Chicago this summer. Shirley, an elephant, broke her leg when she slipped during a long mount. She is recuperating at the Illinois Equine Hospital and reportedly receiving get well cards by the hundreds. And an animal truck overturned on a rain slicked expressway killing a pony, a camel and a llama. We share the sadness caused by these tragic losses.

PEOPLE

CHECKERS & PATCHES (Steve Baker and Gary Ray) featured clowns at Six Flags Over Texas for the past three seasons, are on a cross-country tour and visited with CHUCK BURNES at Knott's Berry Farm. They will be in San Francisco, Las Vegas, New York and other locations within a 3 week period.

LEE and KATHY MERRITT (The Rolls Duo cradle act); the YOUNG TROUPE (teeterboard act) and GEORGE HUBLER were seen on the Circus Vargas lot in the Chicago area.

HARRY J. JENKINS tells about some of his circus experiences in a special article appearing in the Sept. 1980 issue of "Off The Keyboards" magazine.

THE TANGER TROUPE of tumblers are working on the Texas Shrine dates.

BENTLEY BROS. (Continued)

one and evidently previous producers tried to get by with as little as possible, and it does make a difference when you bring in a good show and do not burn up the territory. All towns, including the new ones, have been re-signed and also expansion plans for both tours are anticipated for 1981.

Having the top teeterboard, risley and contortion acts in the business certainly provided strong points and Tommy's love of horses and having dressage, liberty and rosinbacks certainly took Bentley Bros. out of the average league and put it into the big class. All performers had beautiful wardrobe and were professional in every way. Under the watchful eyes of both Chuck and Tommy the show ran smoothly and was fast-paced, with minimum problems, and yours truly did not even get "brain leakage" this time around.

Like the spring tour, the esprit de corps among the personnel was tops and everyone in the backyard got along fine and enjoyed working and living together. Tommy and Chuck set the pace for a congenial show.

Doris Galambos really stole the show as the stooge for Adele & Gory as I have never seen a more impressive one and Doris really would

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get carried away, even pushing ringmaster Tommy Bentley on occasion. Not only that, but when required, she even jumped right in and helped Jim Zoppe in the riding act. What a trouper she is. . .

The closing show in Springfield, Mo., was crazy as might be expected with many acts having surprise endings, like Tommy Bentley presenting the top mounter of the Young Troupe with fresh cut flowers after the four man high, or Doris appearing as a local male "bumpkin" in the riding act, Chuck Clancy appearing all in white on Jim Zoppe's rosinback in spec, but the best part of all was Ben De Wayne in semi-drag swishing through the elephant number doing bumps and grinds that had not been done in years.

Cycle sluts, eat your hearts out - Ben is way ahead of you! Of course the frosting on the cake was Ben running over at the end of the bull number and planting a kiss on ringmaster Bentley which completely unnerved him and surprised the ole veteran of the sawdust trail, and believe me, it takes a lot to unnerve Tommy.

The surprise act of all was the circus debut

(Continued on Page 31)

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HOTLINE

Sept. 22 - Mt. Sterling, Ky - The Carson & Barnes Circus set up in an all day rain, then at 3 p.m. strong winds came up and a sudden gust hit the tent, lifted the big top up into the air, tore it to pieces and tossed in onto the horse trailers. There were no injuries and the 5 p.m. show went on in the open air.

BENTLEY BROS. (Continued)

of Rudolph Delmonte (Fritz) as this was his first major circus since the formation of his unique and crowd pleasing contortion act. It has been a long time since towners have waited around to get autographs or have given standing ovations and years of hard practice has paid off for Pinky, as he is known in the trade and to his friends.

All in all, it was quite a tour for Bentley Bros Circus and already both Tommy and Chuck are working to make their 1981 season even bigger and better. The Good Lord willing, I will return to their show next year, and anticipate another successful season.

REPORT

CARDEN JOHNSON CIRCUS

BY KEN BENSON

The Carden-Johnson Circus played Alexandria, La., on Sept. 13-14, drawing good crowds for all performances.

The show was really strong, with a big clown alley and very heavy on animal acts. Featured were Eddie Steeples bears, Curt Szmanski's chimps, the show owned horse and elephant acts worked by Bobby Gibbs who also does a great job doing many other turns in the show, as well as being the animal superintendent.

Cleo Plunkett was outstanding as the ringmaster. Music was by an organ and drums.

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PEOPLE

DAVID HAMMARSTROM, author of the book "Behind The Big Top" has been making some TV and radio guest appearances to promote his book on the west coast.

STEVE TIGNER, publisher of the "Journal of Magic History" and family visited the Ringling-Barnum Red Unit at Toledo, Ohio.

JIM PARKER, clown and advance man who has been with Bentley Bros. Circus, is visiting his family in Nebraska before heading for Florida for the winter months.

BOB MOORE's Mongrel Revue recently closed at Knott's Berry Farm's Fiesta Plaza after a 13 week summer engagement.

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