



8th Year

January 15, 1979

Number 3

Death In Kansas

A former clown — Robert King — who became a publicity agent for Norman Lee, the Guy Lombardo-style band leader, was killed last month along with Lee and his wife in an apparent robbery. The 55 year old King was popular in eastern Iowa and western Illinois where he clowned as "Roundy the Clown" before joining the Lee organization.

According to officials the Lees were found in the garage of their secluded ranch-style home near Wichita, Kans. King was found in the den of the home that he shared with the Lees. Drag marks indicated the trio had been shot in the back yard and then dragged inside the house.

The victims were dressed as they appeared at their weekly engagement at the Cotillion Ballroom. Mrs. Lee had been shot and stabbed, while the two men had been shot.

Officials described the slayings as "brutal murder" and said a shotgun had been used. However they refused to confirm the gun had been found, but did indicate that a former musician with the Lee band was a prime suspect.

Authorities believe that Lee, who was a part owner of the ballroom, may have brought home some of the proceeds from the dance and that the killer was waiting for them to return that evening. The brief cases and bags that nor-

would have contained money were empty.

Friends say that King was especially popular with young people as a clown and easily made them laugh and have a good time. King, they added, was happiest when he got a job with Lee, whom he had admired for a long time.

"He was just in heaven with Lee," his friends reported.

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by KAYE SCHEIMAN

Dec. 14 - Morris Civic Auditorium at South Bend, Ind. The John Strong/Holloway Productions Christmas Party Show came in here from Cinnati and their next stop was Des Moines, Iowa.

The Ringmaster was L. J. Griep, who with his wife Marsha, presented Magic and Fire Acts (they are also known as Swami Amazo, and Princess Tyronaperu). The music was furnished by Bob and Kay Parker with organ and drums.

After some introductions the program featured: Jugglers, Ron Parry, Pat Davison, Lenny Maizel; Magic, Rolick and Roulette Montbanc; Rings, Rolick, Gym Wheel by Lady Roulette; Cutting in Sixths, Rolick and Roulette, Sword Swallowing, Rolick; Clowning with "Evel Bollweaver" featuring "Crisco Shorts (Chris Kennington) and "Pete Moss" (John Macquire) with Nurses, Marsha Griep and Pam; Rola Bola, Pat and Gwen Davison, featuring the bowling ball trick; Glass Balancing, Billy and Ivy Gunga; Intermission with Magic Book and Balloon pitch; Wire acts by Ron Parry and Pam (Rianos Duo); Clowns with "The Photographers; Fire Eating and 100 ft. rope escape trick by Rolick Montbanc; Acrobats with the Gunga Family, featuring Billy, Ivy, Kamal, Jaya and Maya, and the handstand on chairs; Santa Claus.

Dec. 21 - Delphi, Ind., American Legion Christmas Party.

This show featured: Christmas Music by Gerry Scheiman; Introductions, Davide Zoppe; the Chris Alberti Dogs and Rolling Globes; Clowns "Statue" with Johnny Zoppe, Sr., Frank Loudermilk, Chris and Jean Helt; Webs with Sonja Loudermilk and

PARTY TIME

Tommy Bentley and Chuck Clancy, of Bentley Bros. Circus opened their home to show folks and friends during the Holiday Season and had the following guests drop by.

Richard Bebo, Fred Allen, Jesse C. Castillo, David Beaver, Rudolph Fritz, Anna Fritz, Billy McCabe, Joan Greenwood, Gail Glaser, Robert Weigel, Hank Muckerman, Jimmy Goff, Millie Ward, Elena Omar, Bobby Kay, Mark Anthony, Jim Parker, Mingo Felix, Carlos Campa, Kurt Jarrard, Danny and Virginia Lee Fenton, Chuck Gomes, George Coronas, Eva, Darlene and Renee Williams, and Paul Kaye.

IN MEMORIAM

JOSEPH "Page" WEILAND (80) a former tightwire artist, died at his home in Kansas City, Kans., on Dec. 11th. He and his first wife, the late Lena Weiland, performed on the tightwire for 28 years as Page and Nona. Later he became a juggler and was on the Super and Big Top circuses for television. He started his show business career in vaudeville performing with the Kids Revue. He served as a Branch Manager of the American Guild of Variety Artists after retiring from active show business. Survivors include his present wife, Mabel, a son, Richard and two grandchildren.

Susan Zoppe; Clowns at the Barbershop; Giovanni and Co., Alberti plate spinning; Zoppe's Rhesus Monkey Revue and Santa Claus.

PHONE PROMOTERS

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SHOW DATES

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Circus Vargas
Jan. 16-18 Whittier, Calif.
19-21 Burbank

Cole All Star TV Circus
Jan. 20 Shickshinny, Pa.

L. N. Fleckles Circus
Jan. 19-23 Saginaw, Mich.

Ringling-Barnum - Red Unit
Jan. 16-29 Miami Beach, Fla.

Blackstone Magic Show
Jan. 16 Jacksonville, Fla.
17 St. Petersburg
18 Lakeland
19 Daytona
20 Ft. Lauderdale
21 Punta Gorda

Holiday On Ice - Int'l
Jan 17-21 Savannah, Ga.

Holiday On Ice - Nat'l
Jan. 16-24 Albuquerque, NM

Ice Capades - Cont'l
Jan. 17-21 Columbus, Ohio

Ice Capades - Eastern
to Jan. 21 Hershey, Pa.

Ice Capades - Western
Jan 18-21 Calgary, Albt.

Ice Follies
Jan 16-28 Toronto, Ont.

Jo-Ann & Sunny the Seal
Jan 19-25 Saginaw, Mich.

Loomis Magic Capades
Jan. 17 Apache Junction, Arz
18 Superior
21 Casa Grande

John MacKay - Clown
Jan. 19-23 Saginaw, Mich.

White House in Miniature
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YEAR'S END usually brings an assortment of mail from people one has lost track of, or from whom one hasn't heard for months, or in some instances, years! And on occasion this "voice out of the past" evolves a combination of pleasure and surprise, as it was in my case when, after many long, long years, I finally heard from the renown DON DORSEY who sent not only a Christmas Card but a note. Don writes that he is feeling great and that he is collaborating on a book with CHARLES M. BARR. Just what the tome is about, Don didn't say. Perhaps he will enlighten me when he reads this. At any rate, through me, Don sends Season's Greetings to his many friends everywhere, and adds that he plans to move to and reside in Florida. So, at last the long silence is broken, and those countless people who have asked me, time and time again, "whatever became of the fabulous Don Dorsey?" . . . NOW you know.

The EMMETT KELLY, Jr. Circus played two Christmas dates in the east, one at West Orange (NJ) at the South Mountain Arena (Dec. 22-23), and the other at the grandiose Kennedy Center in Washington (DC) Acts at the date in New Jersey included ETHEL JENNIER, the LEMOINE TROUPE, the WAINWRIGHT Family, AL & JOYCE VIDBEL, CRAWFORD & GLORIA, and MISTER SENSATION.

CLOSEUPS: THE BURKETTS, Lydia and Alphonso, ended the year at Old Chicago and then jumped west to join Circus Vargas. Prior to joining that show and also spending time elsewhere was ROWENA THOMAS who went to England for the Holidays. Rowena writes it was her first visit to see her family in London in five years and that HARRY was left behind to baby-sit the tigers. Quoting a portion of Rowena's letter, to wit: "England is wonderful but believe me, we complain in the states about this, that, and the other, but we have it so good. For instance petrol here is \$1.50 per gal. And one machine at the laundry costs 80c but the dryers are cheap at 25c!" and finishes by saying, (which is true) that "every place has its pros and cons" . . . KEITH KILLINGER was bandleader for the Showfolks Circus when BILL PRUYN was forced to bow out. . . Organist DAVE KING with RBBC Red visited Keith and Kathy over the Holidays. Keith writes that he visited JIMMY ILLE during the New Orleans run for Hanneford. . . BETTY ESCALANTE, "L.A.'s Hostess with the Mostess" had a Mexican dinner for TOMMY BENTLEY and his gang just before Xmas. She reveals that BOBBY KAY is in town and looks great. . . Retirees LISA & TEDDY STEWART are buying a house. . . AL VIDBEL is building a new elephant barn . . . the WAINWRIGHTS plan to move to Colorado. CAROL told me son SHAWN will be out of school

sometime this month. . . The VIDBELS return to the Catskill Game Farm for the summer months (which seems a long way off just now) . . . EMMETT and NANCY KELLY have a new place in Florida. . . Clown MARY WISE is working full time as a recreational director in a Nursing Home, and also doing some free lance clown work, malls and trendy parties. Says she recently finished a great gig at a local theatre's vaudeville show, had a fifteen minute spot all to herself and got good reviews to boot! Mary plans to return to the Hunt's Circus this spring. . . The GEORGE HANNEFORD Circus is featured, in case you didn't know it by now, at the Hall of Fame in Sarasota . . . and finally, SONJA ZOPPE, recently married, has given up show business, which with the way things are going, is as good a reason as any.

The KAYE CONT'L CIRCUS goes to Japan for a 30 day tour from March 29th thru April 27th, 1979. The tour provides round trip air transportation from L.A. and transportation from airport to show-site and from show-site to show-site throughout the tour. Contracts also provides hotel accommodations.

BETTY KELLER RAWLS, once with Dailey Bros. Circus, asks to be remembered to ERNIE BURCH, so Ernie, there's the message. Betty now resides in Chicago. . . In case you're wondering what those juggling BRUNNS are up to, kark; LOTTIE finished 20 odd days of club dates in the Catskills, and FRANCIS is back in the U.S., rehearsing daily in NYC preparatory to another foreign jaunt. MICHAEL CHIRRICK has finished his stint at Circus Circus in Reno and is now scouting property in the Las Vegas area where he plans to build a home. . . My spies are right - more and MORE people are moving to Vegas, show people that is!

BOOK NOOK: DEATH OF AN EXPERT WITNESS by D. J. James (Paperback). A first rate, well-plotted mystery, and rare that this genre strikes a bell on the best-seller charts. The first few chapters are confusing with too many characters drawn in too quickly, but don't let that throw you. Stick with it, you'll enjoy it. Miss James writes knowledgeably about a forensic laboratory in England which makes for fascinating reading. She is touted as England's Crown Princess to their Queen - Agatha Christie. Secretary maybe, but never princess. There is only ONE Christie and no one has yet managed to top her for double-twist and triple-surprise endings!

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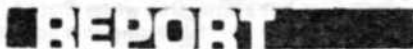
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by PERCY TURNER

The Paul Eagles Luncheon Club held its annual Birthday Party at Phillipis Restaurant, 1001 North Alameda St., Los Angeles. On Sept. 14, 1978, the club was 17 years old.

Bill Binder, owner of Phillipis Restaurant, furnished the usual birthday cake. Wine and platters of vegetable appetizers were also served. (Incidentally, you can still get a cup of coffee here for a dime).

The Paul Eagles Luncheon Club's annual circus for crippled children was held at the State Hospital for Crippled Children in Orange, Calif., on Dec. 20th.

The big top was furnished by Cliff Mosley of De Wayne Bros. Circus. Don Heaston conducted the 15 piece band with calliope, playing real circus music. (All bandmen wore red and gold uniforms).

For the first time the weatherman didn't cooperate and there were gray and cloudy skies with drizzles. But the kids certainly enjoyed the show even with the poor weather.

MAIL BAG

A short time ago there was an article in the Circus Report that May Wirth was the only lady bareback rider to do a somersault from one horse to the other.

In 1918, on Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, Rosa Rosaland did a somersault from one horse to the other, which was called the back across. She also did jump ups from the ground with baskets on her feet.

Sincerely,

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PEOPLE

OLEE and JEANETTE CARLSTROM along with HARRY and FERN CHIPMAN visited the "Schaffner Toby Tent Show Players" in the Los Angeles area last month.

DON PHILIPS & CO., unicycle/juggling; STACEY MOORE's Dogs; VAN DONWEN's Seals; MERLE COOK and his Comedy Car, plus TERRY O'BRIEN slack wire, were all featured at Disney World in Orlando, Fla., at Holiday Time. The bookings were handled by PAUL V. KAYE.

TIM COONEY, REX WILLIAMS, WALLY ROSS, CHARLIE FRANKS, SMOKEY JONES, SCOTT RIDDLE and BOB KELLOGG, all elephant men, were on hand for an operation in Southern California last month when the elephant "Reed" was castrated.

TIM STINSON and other members of the Beatty-

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Cole Circus staff were on hand when the show played Miami, Fla., over the Holidays.

GUNNAR AMANDIS and BILL KAY flew to Rome for a Jan. 8th meeting with Italian producer JOSEPH GIANELLI.

RAY MAREK has formed a new comedy flying act called "Les Mareks" which includes: catcher, DQVE PITTENGER and flyers SCOTT PLUNKETT, CHERYL REED and MITCHELL WEINTRAUB.

PAULETTE BRAUNN writes that she will be back on the road this season with her flaming baton act.

GERARD SOULES and STEVE SCHUMAKER had a breakdown right in front of the Circus Vargas winterquarters in Southern California last month and spent several days with the show while a new transmission was installed in their truck.

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CIRCUS OF THE STARS

by Robert Bowden, St. Petersburg (Fla) Times

I have a pet peeve about television beyond the traditional sex and violence objections of so many.

The thing I dislike the most is seeing dangerous stunts, like Evel Knievel's motorcycle jumps, made to look easy.

Why?

Because I fear some child somewhere will try it - and be killed or kill a friend in the process.

Which brings us to the show at hand. 'Circus of the Stars' is a professional production and the entertainment stars performing circus acts make it appear easy.

Archer Bob Markworth opens the show by putting arrows through balloons held by actress Valerie Perrine. The most dangerous stunt has Markworth blindfolded and aiming the arrow by hearing Ms. Perrine's voice. No warnings to children accompanies the act.

Later we see Buddy Hackett shoot an apple from the hand of Michelle Phillips. Hackett then "outlines" Ms. Phillips with shots from his collection of revolvers. She appears scared stiff throughout. Again, no warning to children.

THANK YOU

I want to thank the cast of Circus America for the invitation to their private New Year's Eve Party at Capital Centre.

With a Special Thanks to Joe and Elizabeth Bauer and Carla Wallenda.

..... Billy Barton

Announcers do issue warnings at one point in the show, but these pertain to children trying high wire acts. Surely a thoughtful producer would note children have easier access to a bow and arrows than to a high wire.

Despite the shortcoming of inadequate warnings, the show overall is a glossy two hours. I was amazed at the professionalism of many of the stars. It's a better package of circus acts than many of the small traveling circuses provide. Particularly impressive is Tony LoBianco with his "big cats" act, Gary Collins on the high wire and Betty White with Dondi the elephant.

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SPECIAL

(The following item was released to newspapers last month by the Associated Press and carried a date-line of Paris, France).

Man's feathered and four-legged friends have won a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Animals, and they've got the United Nations on their side.

Adopted recently at a ceremonial meeting of UNESCO, the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Animal Charter opens with the words: "All animals are born with an equal claim on life and the same rights to existence."

The ceremony, attended by statesmen, artists, Nobel prize winners, included a display of 2.1 million signatures collected around the world in defense of animal rights.

The charter, which is to become U. N. law in 1980, spells out what animal lovers are pushing governments all over the world to embody in legislation:

That it's wrong to abandon your dog in the street when you go on vacation; that it's unfeeling to gas stray cats; that it's hideous to keep pigs or cattle locked inside container trucks, sweating or freezing while custom officials settle their labor disputes; that it's beastly to raise chickens or rabbits in shoebox-sized cages or drop live lobsters in boiling water.

Singled out for special condemnation are scientists, the entertainment world and hunters on the grand scale.

"Animal experimentation involving physical or psychological suffering is incompatible with the rights of animals," says the charter.

"No animal shall be exploited for the amusement of man. Exhibitions and spectacles involving animals are incompatible with their dignity."

"Any act involving mass murder of wild animals is genocide, that is, a crime against the species."

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(The following information has been taken from the Mattel Report to Stockholders for the nine months ending Nov. 4, 1978. To fully understand the Mattel financial position one must read the full report).

"Note 3 - On May 31, 1978, Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey Circus World, Inc. (Circus Theme Park) executed a \$20,000,000 five year 9½% note secured by the capital stock and certain personal property of the Circus Theme Park. The note is guaranteed by Mattel Inc. The proceeds, together with other general funds were used to retire then existing term loans and mortgages of approximately \$32,800,000."

"... The Hobby Products group and Entertainment group sales were higher than the prior year by 9% and 16% respectively. Monogram sales gains of 29% were responsible for the Hobby Products increase and the Circus Theme Park revenues which increased approximately 60% over the prior year were primarily responsible for the Entertainment group increase."

"... As part of its growing involvement in television activities, Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, Inc. has produced a television special entitled 'Circus Super Heroes' with Bruce Jenner as the Master of Ceremonies to be aired on the NBC television network. The show features selected performers and acts of the Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey Circus and was filmed in part at the Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey Circus World Theme Park in Orlando, Florida.

"The Circus Theme Park has continued to experience strong gains with attendance running approximately 37% ahead of last year for the nine months. This improvement reflects initial benefits derived from the physical expansion of the park completed in July 1978."

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POPULAR

LILLI-ANA and her leopards will be playing dates with GEORGE HUBLER, EDDIE ZACCHINI, BILL KAY and the Kentucky State Fair this season.

BONNIE & CLYDE will tour with the Int'l All Star Circus this year, opening Jan. 26th at Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

KIM KRISTENSEN has purchased a new Arabian stallion and will have two horses in his act this season. He has been signed to work some dates for SAM T. POLACK this year.



IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT HELVIE, former clown and a circus buff died late last year. He clowned with Clyde Bros., Cole Bros. and the Terrell Jacobs shows, and was well known in Peru, Ind. After leaving show business he entered politics and became a County Sheriff. His last work was that of a Supervising Sgt. at the Indiana State Prison at Michigan City, Indiana.

J. KING ROSS, retired circus performer and animal trainer, died at Roswell, N. M. on Dec. 15th. He came from a show business family and spent his entire life in the business. At one time he had a seal act and he was a well-known dog trainer and circus announcer. After leaving the circus business he wrote books about training and conducted dog training classes and gave lectures about animals. Survivors include his wife and two daughters.

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TOP

HELEN WALLEDA and **STEPHANIE SHAW** were in London last month for the 3rd Annual Circus World Championships, where Helen was one of the five judges.

JIM PARKER, clown with Circus Vargas, played Santa Claus for **MARTY KROFT**, of Sid and Marty Kroft fame, at his annual Christmas Party in his new home in Bel Air, Calif.

KRISTAVO, juggler, who injured his back last year and was unable to work for several months is gradually improving and has already started practicing his routines once again.

BETTY LEONARD, of Wichita, Kans., and a former circus performer, is at home recovering from a fall last month in which she suffered a broken shoulder.

BOB EMERICO, clown and magician, is back in the Pacific Northwest working a series of school dates with his Magic Show.

MARTHA SMITH, of Clinton, Mich., is recovering at home after having broken an ankle in a fall on an icy street just before Christmas.

BUCK NOLAN, the world's tallest clown, will be

TALENT

The program for Christmas Shows produced by Tommy Bentley and Chuck Clancy last month featured: Los Latinos, wire act; Harris Nelson, novelty; Princess Omar, one finger stand; Circus Vargas clowns (David Beaver, Billy McCabe, Jim Parker); Bill Shaday, magic; Lani Ironberg, rope spinning; Clowns; Tina's Canine Revue; Intermission; The Great Huberto, slide for life; Clowns; Tina the Mime, and Dirk Arthur, magic, with Santa Claus closing the show.

back on the Hoxie's Great American Circus for his fourth season, as producing clown, this year. He recently talked with **JUNE "Ducky" DEWSBURY** who is hospitalized in New York City.

DOREY MILLER will receive the "Founders Award" for having two great circus bands in 1978 and **JIM GIBSON** will receive the "Founders Award" for his great band on Circus Vargas last year. The presentations will be made by **WARD STAUTH** at the convention of Windjammers Unlimited in New Orleans.

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NOTICE

There was no Circus Report for the week of Dec. 25, 1978. That was our annual Christmas vacation week. The No. 51-52 issue was published for Dec. 18th.

It was a bad error on my part not to have mentioned this in the Dec. 18th issue and it was an oversight for which I am sorry.

..... Don Marcks

PEOPLE

IAN MacINTYRE, clown with the Gatti show last year, reports that a New Years fire wiped out all of his magic and clown props at his home in San Francisco. He will be touring this season with the Royal Hanneford Circus.

SEÑOR ANTONIO, head balancing trapeze artist, is one of the feature acts on the all new Circus Vargas program this season.

DON BRIDWELL, clown working as "Whizzer the Clown" will be off the road this season due to the poor health of his wife **FRAN** (Spunky the Clown). Do n and Fran were on Garden Bros. Circus last year

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and Don played dates for Jimmy Douglass and the Emmett Kelly, Jr. Circus.

MARIO MANZINI, escape artist, was injured during the Circus World Championship Show in London when he fell 25 ft. from a loose rope. The accident shattered his right ankle and foot and dislocated a bone. He is recuperating at: St. James Hospital, Ward 13, Sarsfield Road, Balham, London, SW 12, England.

PAUL WESSLER has been visiting friends in the San Francisco area for the past couple of weeks.

BILL WILLIAMS (Cotton Candy the Clown) continues to work Birthday and Special Party events in the Northern California area.



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CIRCUS AMERICA

by Billy Barton

Billed as the "Holiday Engagement of Circus America", this one-ring extravaganza festooned the 18,000 seat Capitol Centre with virtuosity and tinsel-laden thrills, featuring a preponderance of top-calibre acts. But it is possible for even seasoned superstars to sometimes find themselves outpaced, if only in scant inches by the circus debut of a new talent - such as Dave Mc Millan and his incredible flying tigers, unquestionably the show's highlight. Never has a wild animal act, with so many animals moved with such speed, such aplomb, such nonchalance, or such matter-of-fact control.

Coolly imperturbable McMillan zooms in on a motor-cycle, a-glitter in skin-tight rhinestones, to enter a cage asworn with tigers to which more, and then more are released until eighteen are seated in the 40 foot arena. The action is NOW, no long intervals of prop build-ups, no tiresome coaxing of cats from pedestals.

When a cage of tigers performs the lay-down, cats jump to line up quickly, lie down immediately and presto! they're back on their seats. Thus the term "flying tigers" is no press agent's hyperbole. A lion and black panther are also used in an act that is punctuated by humor and clever facial expressions.

Twelve year old Dino, of Dino and Anita, a tight-wire act, shows much potential. At an amazing youthful age the lad has already developed enviable showmanship. By eighteen he should be a top name, when adulthood accentuates his graceful movements and the lay-out somersault he's rehearsing is added.

The name "Wallenda" evokes instant visions of televised tragedy and triumph. The new act features curvaceous Rietta Wallenda supported by three boys in traditional Wallenda-created pyramids and the chair-

closer. Kids are attractive, stylish, and smooth. The Bauers, long associated with sway pole thrills have lost none of it; nor has Hugo Zacchini lost his impact the last of the cannonballs shot from a cannon and not from a skeletal catapult. The Sensational Leighs registered with their crowd-pleasing space wheel.

Miss Elizabeth's break-away leap was a curtain raiser, followed by stunning Jeannette Rix with mixed polar, grizzly and black bears. Also spotlighted were Miss Lisa, whose bare-foot heel catches are dangerous and honestly executed; the Cristiani elephants, and the fabulous Flying Espanas who are in one word: superb!

Comedy was deft and sufficient, interspersed by Norbu, Jorge Rossell's unusual comedy car (i.e. a hydraulic lift suspending the clunker while the front wheels bounce off), and the Italian Musical Clown Importation, the Dilellos, outstanding musicians all, with funny visual gags and eccentric mobile wigs.

Anything that removes one's eyes from the action is a disruption, and the giant telescreen, hanging box-like in the arena's center is exactly that. This idea is fine for a prizefight, or rock group, where an image fills the screen, but it is distracting in a circus.

Due to a broken axle on his bus, Victor Julian arrived three days late and then, because of an already too-long program, did not appear, which was a pity. Lack of animal acts was noticeable. Productions could have been trimmed to provide time for Julian's act. In this, the production staff were guilty of sacrificing foolishness to self-indulgence.

Apparently Broadway people were brought in to stage the show. Why? Since when have circus people been drafted to stage Broadway shows? Lest I be a "die-hard" accused of carping on production in circuses, let me say that no one enjoys production more. Unless numbers are suitable and brief, however, these

(Continued on Page 19)

SAWDUST TRAIL

by M. L. DUPONT

A familiar name with a new title appeared on the scene in Texas on Jan. 7th when Mel Silverlake opened his "Col. Silverlake's Real Wild West & Circus" at Blessing, Texas, on Jan. 7th. The show is carrying 5 elephants and will play winter dates in Texas. Show man Gopher Davenport was a visitor on opening day.

Recently passing through Monroe, La. was Dave Clayton, former mechanic for the C&B No. 2 Unit. Dave stopped long enough to call his friend Ken Benson at the local zoo. Dave was moving a trailer from Florida to Hugo, Okla.

The new and better Jungle Wonders Circus will feature a flying act this season. Another feature act will be Jack Fulbright and his high school horses. The show will hold a full dress rehearsal just prior to its opening date.

Katie Nelson, female clown on C&B No. 2 last season will be moving over this year to the big C&B show. Katie is an RBBB College graduate.

Ringling's 1979 ad matt for the Red Unit features the ever popular Lou Jacobs with the title and globe above him and the wording 'All New 109th Year' in a circle on his arm. Prices for the Dec. 28-31 Venice date were scaled at \$4.50, \$5.50 and \$6.50 with eight shows given in the Circus Arena.

Ken Benson has built a cover over his pick up for the coming season. This will protect his dogs, boxes for tools, dog food and his motorcycle while on the road. He even has a 50 gal. water tank set up there.

Sarasota Herald Tribune reports: "Hanneford Family Featured . . . The Circus Hall of Fame is preparing new acts for its Winter Circus featuring the famous Hanneford Family of this city." — Helen Walenda spent Christmas with her show in Washington,

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DC — Al and Sue Dawley spent the holidays in Sarasota.

The Dec. 3rd issue of the Sarasota Herald Tribune carried a full color photo of Gunther Gebel-Williams on an elephant with violinist Ms. Peter Devlin, to kick off the Sarasota Symphony for the Holidays. Gunther and his wife were guests at the Yuletide Ball sponsored by the Suncrest Symphony in Venice on Dec. 16th.

The Carson & Barnes documentary that was aired by NBC on 'Weekend' Dec. 23rd was pre-empted by a football game. As a result many fans were unable to see this show. Perhaps letters to NBC would bring a re-run of the very fine film.

Speaking of Clowns, as I often do: Ron Severini

(Continued on Page 19)

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REVIEW (Continued)

insertions are often boring. Let's face it, no show outdoes Ringling with this format and I am beginning to wish other shows would stop trying. Only two ensembles were effective, the opening butterfly number with girls surrounding and partially concealing the bear arena, and a "sparkler" number introducing Lisa Bauer. The twelve girls neither walked nor danced but succeeded mostly in stumbling.

Circus America producers hope to make this an annual event and to possibly tour. Let's hope they're successful. It's a superior show. Let's hope also the choreographer is allotted either girls who can dance or more time in which to train them.

Michael Davis, a Broadway vocalist, was cast as ringmaster. He looked the part, vocalized well, had a resonant voice, but like all amateur ringmasters had a love affair with his own voice. Acts don't need narration, only an into and a spotlight; and a professional circus bandleader who faces acts, not musicians, and who knows how to cue a circus. Circus music is fitted to acts and not, as in a Broadway show, the other way round.

Circus talent was booked and coordinated by Bauer-Hall Enterprises. Joseph Bauer was performance director. Talent was well-selected. The two and a half hour program ran tight.

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SAWDUST TRAIL (Continued)

and his wife, Sandy, a husband and wife clown team for RBBB who have been working ahead of the big show are now co-deans of the Clown College. They have the difficult job of selecting 50 young people for the school from some 3,000 applicants.

J. Allen Duffield and family spent Christmas with their daughter and family. Al reports "we had a fine dinner, some good football games, and a nice evening lunch." Allen is Secretary/Treasurer for CFA.

In the past this writer reported that CFA'r Tex Dreyfus spent several days with Carson & Barnes in upper Texas. What I failed to mention was that M. A. Miller, former circus man, was with Tex. Many circus people are indebted to Mr. Miller who always has room for show folks passing through the Houston area.



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