



8th Year

November 19, 1979

Number 47

Court Backs County

Florida's Supreme Court has refused to hear a case involving Property Appraiser John Mikos and the Ringling-Barnum Circus, about back taxes owed the county.

In declining to accept jurisdiction on an appeal filed by Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, the court left standing a Second District Court ruling in favor of Mikos.

The suit covered the tax years 1972 to 1976 and now means the circus owes some \$250,000 in back taxes, plus penalties.

The suit involved the circus' tangible property which is used in its two circus trains. Mikos assessed the property at 100 percent valuation because he said it was permanently located in the Florida county.

The circus claimed the property was only temporarily kept there and that it should only pay a portion of the taxes based on how long the property was actually in the county.

If the court had ruled in favor of the circus, yearly taxes on the train property would have amounted to about \$9.00 per year. Since the appeals court ruled in favor of the appraiser the back taxes will be \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year.

The circus maintains facilities in Venice, Fla., where shows are assembled and rehearsed, and maintenance work is performed on the equipment. While the circus is there only about 10 weeks each year, the appeals court said the property enjoyed the protection of the state and was not in the "stream of commerce"

(Continued on Page 14)

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HOLLIN

ELAINE SLONIN, aerialist, fell 20 feet from a trapeze during the evening performance of the Royal Hanneford Circus at the Civic Center, in Baltimore, Md. on Nov. 10th.

She was treated at a local hospital for a broken jaw and multiple lacerations. She has since rejoined the circus but will not be working for the rest of the season.

JOHN STEBBING, of Stebbing's Royal European Circus, was attacked by one of his huge cats during the show's final performance for the 1979 season at Davison, N.C. He suffered a torn shirt and a ripped hand.

In true tradition, John tore off the sleeve of his shirt, made a pressure bandage over the wound, and completed the act, to a standing ovation by the audience. He was later treated at a local hospital and released.

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.....by KARL J. BISCHOFF

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Nov. 22-25 Evansville, Ind.
- PAL Circus
Nov. 24 San Francisco, Calif.
- Sam T. Polack Circus
Nov. 24-26 Charleston, W. Va.
- Ringling-Barnum - Red Unit
Nov. 21-Dec. 2 Nassau, L.I.
- Royal Hanneford Circus
Nov. 19-25 New Orleans, La.
- End of the Season -
- Royal Lichtenstein Circus
Nov. 19 New Orleans, La.
20 Lafayette
21 Houston, Texas.
- Shrine Circus
Nov. 19-25 Grand Rapids, Mich
- Texas Shrine Circus
Nov. 21-25 Dallas, Texas
- Wonderland Circus Revue
Nov. 19 Ruffin, S.C.
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20 Middletown
21 Hartford
22 New London
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AS STATED in last week's column, NANCY GIORDANO'S letter to The Editor (CR: 22 Oct) only points up the irresponsibility of journalists reporting on the circus and its people.

Worst offenders are novelists and scriptwriters and since their output attracts more widespread attention than do pieces penned by local reporters, it is these writers with whom this article will deal. There has yet to be filmed a motion picture yet to be written a novel which delineates the whole. Characters are almost always one-dimensional, the circus is almost always confused with the carnival.

Truth is the circus is not so much a profession as it is an entity, a world in which people of all races, nationalities, religions, and life-styles co-mingle in an environment that warring nations and malcontents might do well to emulate. It is a world in which the Family dominates. No other profession is so family oriented. It is a world where divorce is fractional, serious crime marginal, where petty jealousies, gripes and complaints, even personal vendettas are often overcome by crisis or necessity and where people pull as a unit to achieve residual results.

Scriptwriters and novelists would have the outside world believe otherwise.

Why should we be so frequently maligned and libeled, singled out as second-class citizens when most of us have deep roots in society, own our homes, send children to schools, vote and pay taxes?

Certainly circus life is fraught with hardship and may seem to the uninitiated to be a bizarre existence. And we are by no means a special little band of angels. Our world is well populated with its quota of baddies. But we are, after all, only human and share with mankind its foibles, fancies and foolishness.

Fact is our world is so small the outlandish or flamboyant is more obvious, is often all the visiting writer sees or wishes to see and therein lies the problem. When the circus is discovered to be NOT the glamorous mystery it was envisioned the writer sets about to embellish that mystery with his own peculiar sense of fantasy.

Actually, circus people, being inherently such hard workers, are a fairly dull lot.

Overlooked, too, is our robust sense of humor, sharpened by adversity, occupational hazard, the

ever-increasing burden of transporting ourselves from one place to another, bedeviled by permits, animal headaches, gas prices and ripoffs from garage mechanics to corrupt public officials. Not only does humor see us through our problems but evokes in us a natural and mind-saving instinct to laugh at ourselves and our misfortunes. That laughter automatically ceases however when it is directed against us as it so often is.

In the past several years we have been grossly insulted by three books in particular, CIRCUS! by Allistair MacLean, so patently juvenile and so blatantly ridiculous as to be disregarded; The RINGMASTER by Darryl Poniscan, an example of hack writing at its worst and lowest; and a non-fiction atrocity called MUD SHOW by Fred Powladge. Only CIRCUS! had a brisk sale but that was because the book was primarily a thriller and not strictly about the circus.

Fortunately there have been few recent circus films to make us squirm. Other than the CBS annual Circus of the Stars which makes a mockery of our talent. But for this the circus people have only themselves to blame for lending their talents to it.

What can we do to protect ourselves? For one thing we can stop divulging free-wheeling information to every journalist who walks on our lots or into our buildings. And in the case of a book, or an article involving direct quotes, we can ask for approval before the book or article goes to press. Failing that we can hit the miscreants where it hurts - in the pocket book.

Circus people are voracious readers. During the hectic season it is often one of the few available past times we have. I'm sure we make up a small percentage of the book buying market but it is nevertheless a market the publisher in these uncertain times can ill afford to lose.

Those of us involved in reporting for Circus Report are not infallible either and inaccuracies do occur which are immediately rectified. False or misleading stories are never printed intentionally. A number of us working for the paper are a living part of the industry and so we must have strong feelings for it otherwise we wouldn't involve ourselves in what is so frequently a thankless labor.

(Continued on Page 20)

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REPORT

CIRCUS WILLY HAGENBECK

..... by Jack Niblett

The Circus Willy Hagenbeck bears a greatly respected German circus surname, and while this present circus does not contain any members of the original family, the Director being Frau Ingrid Hoppe, it maintains a very high standard in presenting a traditional circus in the classical style associated with the Hagenbeck name.

The program opens with an introduction by the "speaker" Peter Weygande, who is also an accomplished magician and who introduces a few tricks during the program.

Dresseur Gerhard Braune mounted on a fine Andalusian stallion brings in his four chestnut, four grey and four spotted stallions in liberty routine numbers, and finished with a short display of Haute Ecole. Then follows the Trapers, comedy low wire act; the Munoz Brothers, Portuguese clowns in a bull fight parody; Les Brumbucks (who have appeared with RBBB in the past) in sword and dagger balancing; Hagenbeck's six elephants presented by Mr. Sambo; Rob Roy, equilibrist; the Hassani Troupe, Moroccan tumblers; Gerhard Braune in a big horse display with mixed horses featuring special ultra-violet lighting effects and a fine fire-horse; Guzman & Monique, well known to American audiences in their aerial motorcycle act, bring the first half of the program to a thrilling close.

Joseph C. Reisinger

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The Interval lasted for half-an-hour, giving the German audience plenty of time to patronize the bar and eat their favorite frankfurters.

The second half opened with a ten-strong lion and lioness act, presented by Tom Dieck, a young Dutchman with a most pleasant style. Gerhard Braune was in the big cage for the next act with two tigers and two elephants, a novel act which includes ball rolling by elephant and tigers and an elephant-riding tiger.

The Odors, trapeze act; Los Alamos, with their splendid knife and axe throwing act; followed by the Munoz Brothers in a very long clown act - slapstick and music and very much to the taste of the audience. Ivan Karl, billed as the World's Smallest Strong Man, presented some startling feats in a light-hearted manner, and the last act was an uproarious one - Fritz Mullens and his unrideable mules.

A grand parade with all the artists, with applause coming from both sides of the ring fence ended the show in excellent and traditional circus style with no frills or gimmicks.

Mention must be made of the very fine circus band of nine musicians, imported from Poland and led by Henryk Staszak, they were an act in themselves.

Ivan Karl, despite his Russian name and style is really an Englishman, an old friend of mine, and has been working on the Continent for several years. I am grateful to him for his hospitality during my visit to the circus.

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PEOPLE

MARY JUNIOR WENGRZYN (Frog Lady) per-
formed her barrel contortion act on the Bozo
TV Show in Chicago on Oct. 18th. She was book-
ed by the Howard Schultz Agency.

HELEN WALTERS plans to spend Thanksgiving
in Washington, DC. She reports that her grandson
who is in the Marines has been promoted to a
Major.

JOHN McKAY, clown, will be working dates for
JIMMY DOUGLASS, TOMMY BENTLEY and
many other producers during the 1980 season.

PAUL T. TAMBOURY (Sad Sam) and DAVE

FULTON (Foo Gee), clowns, will be with the
annual PAL Circus at the Cow Palace in San
Francisco on Nov. 24th.

MILONGA CLINE recently visited friends on the
Clyde Beatty Circus in Orlando, along with DAVE
and MARJORIE HACKETT. Milonga reports she
is now a grandmother, as her daughter KATHY
had a baby boy, born in Baraboo on Nov. 1st.

HANABELLE, the Lady Clown, will serve as
Captain of Clown Alley No. 98's unit which will
be in the annual Macy Thanksgiving Day parade
in New York City.

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SPECIAL**ILLEGAL FUND RAISING CHARGES**

Michigan Attorney General, Frank J. Kelley, has filed charges against a Warren-Based fundraising company and its president for soliciting charity money without a license.

The suit, filed in Ingham County Circuit Court alleges that only \$500 out of a total of \$2,700 in contributions eventually found its way to the Macomb Organization for the Disabled. The money was raised by Gem Promotions, Inc. and its president was listed as August Plasky.

According to Assistant Attorney General Pat Isom, the company has no right to any funds or fees because it lacks the required state license.

The Detroit Free Press reports that Plasky was not available for comment on the charges.

PEOPLE

TOM CANTY, popular San Francisco Bay Area performer (Cantini) is now in a nursing home and reportedly is declining rapidly.



DON BRADSHAW and family, of Ukiah, Calif., have an atique popcorn wagon as part of their concession operation for fairs and special events.

CLARK McDERMOTT and his Cold Nose Five act, worked a Nov. 9-10 date for the Olympic Club in San Francisco.

SUE and RUDI LENZ, of RBBB's Red Unit, have added a new chimp to their popular center ring act.

OLEG and LUDMILA PROTOPOPOV, Russian Olympic skating stars who recently defected in Switzerland, will join the Ice Capades show at Oakland, Calif. on Nov. 20th.

HERBERT UECKERT, circus historian, was featured in a special full page story with pictures in the Sept. 23rd issue of the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

SAMPION and MARIE FRANCE plan to tour with the Hubert Castle Circus for the 1980 season.

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- NO COLLECTS -

IF IT HAD NOT BEEN GOOD I WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN HERE ALL THESE YEARS ALL MY OLD CIRCUS PALS CONTACT. FOLLOWING GET IN TOUCH. EARL, BIG BOB, FRANCIS, PEGGY, NANCY, JEANNE, TONY and BILL.

Show Dates

Boo-Lu the Clown

Nov. 23 Berkeley, Calif.

Disco Fever

Nov. 19 Rome, Ga.

20 Chattanooga, Tenn.

21 Knoxville

22 Asheville, N.C.

23 Hickory

24 Danville, Va.

Globetrotters

Nov. 19 Minot, N. D.

Gutis Family - Comedy Act

Nov. 22-25 Hammond, Ind.

Hal Haviland's Vaudeville

Nov. 25 Elmira, N. Y.

Ice Capades - Cont'l Unit

Nov. 21-25 Montgomery, Ala.

Ice Capades - Eastern Unit

Nov. 21-25 Ottawa, Ont.

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1979 CARSON & BARNES date sheets. Five assorted sizes and dates \$2 postpaid. H-G Enterprises, Box 151, Clarklake, Mich. 49234.

MAGIC ORIGINAL FRENCH PUFF BALL RECIPE - Easy, Delicious. Send \$2.00 to P. O. Box 413, Lafayette, Calif. 94549.

TRY A NEW HOBBY for 1980. "Today Is Circus Day In . . .?" Keep up with the daily movements of circuses. Know when the Circus enters your state. Watch its route as it moves closer to your city. Write for FREE SAMPLE. Charlie Campbell 150 - 10th St. N. E., Atlanta, Ga.

In Memoriam

ALFRED GERALD CAPP (70) creator of the "Li'l Abner" comic strip, died Nov. 5th at Cambridge, Mass., after a long illness. He was introduced to cartooning by his father and started his "Li'l Abner" strip in 1934. At the height of his career he was earning \$500,000 a year. In 1968 he gave up the strip and retired. Survivors include his wife, Catherine, and a son Colin C. Capp.

MORRIS CHALFEN (72) former owner of Holiday On Ice shows and promoter of Soviet shows in the U. S., died at Minneapolis on Nov. 4th after suffering a heart attack. He and Emery Gilbert started Holiday On Ice in 1945 and the two units were recently sold to the Ringling-Barnum/Mattel interests. Chalfen arranged for the first U. S. tour of the Soviet Circus and also brought in a variety of other Soviet shows. Survivors include his wife, Beverly, and two adopted sons.

REPORT

SHOWTIME FOLLIES . . . by Don Sandman

The Showtime Follies played Xenia, Ohio, on Oct. 31st, where the Seratoma Club of Xenia sponsored the show for a Halloween Night treat for both adults and children. The performance was presented at 7 p.m. at the Benner Field House.

The show is managed by Wes Oler, with Holveck handling the announcing chores. Music was provided by Florine Oler, organist and Mario Alberti on the drums.

Paulette Braunn started the show off with an exhibition of baton twirling, featuring lots of fire. She was followed by Holveck & Co., with a variety of magic that kept the audience wondering how he did it.

Mario Von Albert & Co., presented hand balancing on a table, then Sunshine the Clown (Tommy Holveck) worked the crowd, shaking hands and offering a flower, or should we say a fake flower as Holveck was left with just the stem?

The Kolmedy's head balancing was next, after which the public was offered a chance to buy a magic coloring book. Then came a balloon pitch and intermission.

TAX CASE (Continued)

that would permit a tax break.

Mikos said the assessments on the property since 1976 will be litigated in local courts, but the Second District Court has established a precedent for the other suits.

Attorney John Dent, who successfully represented Mikos in the suit, said Ringling's only recourse would be to the U. S. Supreme Court. But the nation's highest court rarely takes jurisdiction when a state court has declined to do so.

The second half action started with Sampion an excellent juggler, then while the stage was being set Holveck warmed up the crowd with "we're glad you're here".

Ray Marek & Co., kept the audience on the edge of its seats with his plate spinning and was followed by Holveck with his Metamorphosis trick which was assisted by four men from the audience.

Marie France presented her Pomeranians, a well trained group, The Olmeda's proved they could ride any bike and then the show was over.

Circus Fans seen at the show were Al Conover, Charles DeWein, Jake Conover and the writer.

WASHINGTON TUBBS II



REPORT

ANIMALS ESCAPE

Authorities successfully corralled several lions and tigers after the wreck of a circus truck spilled their cages about the highway, some 30 miles from Biloxi, Miss., on Nov. 3rd.

The mishap occurred about 8 a.m. as the Carson & Barnes Circus was enroute to D'Iberville, Miss. A show truck carrying the big cats and the steel arena had a blow-out, jack-knifed and then went into the ditch. Animal cages, the arena and truck were demolished, releasing the wild animals.

One tiger was killed in the wreck and a lion had to be shot because it had a broken back. Some animals were tranquilized and recaptured. One was found in an abandoned house, another in a barn and one was found asleep. One tiger was located playing with toys in the front yard of a home about three miles from the accident.

Makeshift cages were built, U-Haul trailers were rented and then both animals and equipment moved on with the show.

No personal injuries were reported. The local Sheriff's officers responded quickly to the call for assistance and provided ground help as well as bringing in their helicopter so the animals could be spotted from the air.

SPECIAL

STREET HONORS MAGICIAN . . .

. . . by Lloyd E. Jones

P. C. Sorcar, called by many the World's Greatest Magician before his early death a few years ago, has been honored by the Indian Government by having a street in his native city, Calcutta, named for him.

On Nov. 11th, the Ekdalia Road which is on the left side of the Sorcar residence (Indrajal) was changed to Jadu-Samrat P. C. Sorcar Saranee.

Dr. Roma Chanduri, noted Bengali educator conducted the ceremonies with Sri Prasanta Sur, Minister of Corporation, and Sri Jatin Chakraborty, Minister of Housing aiding in the ceremonies. A special guest was Sri Sachin Sen, M. L. A. of West Bengal.

The All India Magic Circle collected messages of good wishes, congratulations, etc., of the ceremonies and these will later be published in memory of the late great, P. C. Sorcar.

Sorcar's son, P. J. Sorcar, Jr., American educated is carrying on the tradition set by his father and presents a full evening show which already has made tours of several Asian and European nations to favorable press reviews

By Crane



MAGIC

KISS CONJURING by Keep it Simple . . . Stupid, FRANK HERMAN

Received a beautiful long letter from oldtime showman, Bill Ruesskamp, of Cape Girardeau, Mo. Bill's first brush with showbiz started in '16 as usher at Girardeau's local opera house. From there Bill went on as a performer with showboat and tent shows.

Two names in Bill's letter captured my attention. One was a guy named Haines who did a "Jumping Act". His advance billing would state that he would jump on a basket of eggs without breaking a single cackle berry. This was to be followed by Haines jumping on his wife's face with both feet. AND he did it.

For example, the lady sat on a chair with her head bent backwards, resting on a table. The jumper would leap over the table and as his feet passed over his wife, he would flick his toes down and lightly tap her nose. He did the same thing with the basket of eggs.

Anyone want to try this stunt today? The exploitation possibilities are endless. TV, newspaper, etc. Might even get "Playboy" to feature the face jumping bit with the centerfold gal. Seriously, does anyone have pictures, programs or anything referring to this act?

The other name that jumped off the pages of Bill's letter was Doc Cuning. "Cuning the Escape Artist" gave Houdini massive competition until Harry hired him to stooge as a challenger. Doc had a multi-facted career - Ringmaster for Al G. Barnes, Equestrian Director, Magician, Mitt Reader, etc. He even toured Mexico as a pitchman selling sex books.

I worked with Doc for four weeks in 1939 at Robinsons Dept. Store Toyland in Los Angeles. We were hired for the Christmas Season. Doc was Santa Claus and I was the Hindu Magician. We also had a clown from the Barnes show, I've forgotten his name, plus a guy in a Skipper costume with a trained Penquin.

Cuning, whose real name was Cunningham, was the world's greatest Santa. In '39, his body had gone round and his hair was naturally white. His ability at cold reading had even the smart aleck 11 and 12 year olds convinced he really was Santa Claus.

Kids had to sign in with a Princess about 40 feet from Santa's throne. There was a concealed mike at the Princess' desk and Doc had earphones under his red cap and wig. He had a bear trap



Would you believe it? The west coast is once again in the midst of a paper shortage. Local supply houses report the problem has come about because they never had a chance to get caught up on orders and that the mills have turned out less paper each month than before they were on strike.

Because of the uncertain future and due to the confusion regarding the page size for Circus Report we have decided against doing a special Holiday issue as such. As a result we will not solicit Greeting ads for the paper this season. We shall publish a Christmas issue of sorts which will be dated Dec. 17th.

Those of you who have already sent in Christmas Greeting ads and would now like to have a refund please let us know and your check will be in the mail that same day.

Anyone who wishes to send in an ad, and all of those on hand will be included in the Dec. 17th issue.

Hopefully in 1980 things will smooth out to the point where we can publish Circus Report without the constant problems that have erupted during the past year.

Don't forget, Circus Report would make an ideal gift for a friend or member of the family. Why not order a gift subscription today?

Oh, yes. The final issue for 1979 will be the copy that goes out for the week of Dec. 17th - then it will be a two week rest and preparation work for the upcoming year.

memory and while he was talking to one kid he was listening and sizing up the next youngster.

I had two great experiences with Doc that I'll never forget. First one: The manager of Robinson's Toy Dept. sent us all out to entertain at an orphanage. We piled into Doc's Model T - Santa, Clown, Penquin, Trainer and me the Hindu. All of us were in costume and makeup. This made a picture Norman Rockwell would have loved. We did the show and on the way back to the store, Jack and Doc decided they wanted a quick libation.

We were all still in full regalia and it was about

(Continued on Page 17)

FRANK HERMAN (Continued)

11 a.m. Santa pulled his Ford in front of a neighborhood bar. Since I was the punk they decided to send me in first to case the joint. There was only one customer and he was not in top shape. When I entered with my beard, turban and blazing yellow satin shirt, the bleery eyed guy looked up and shook his head with an alcoholic double take. I waved the rest of the tribe in. As Santa, the clown, and finally the Skipper put a live Penguin on the bar . . . the poor boozier just couldn't take it . . . just sort of faded out the door.

SCENE Two: After Christmas I kept in touch with Doc. He lived in Santa Monica and kept a bunch of small animals. Doc was not living in the lap of luxury. He kept the wolf from the door with a mini-dog and pony show. Played schools, community fairs and supermarkets when he could get the work.

Everytime I visited, I noticed that Doc was itching to ask me something. Finally, it came out. "You know Dante?" he asked. I told him I had a friend, Jim Conley the illusionist that visited Dante often. "Old Bastard is probably too stuck up to see me now." I assured him that Dante was not stuck up and would be glad to see him.

Further conversation revealed they had been good friends but had a serious falling out in their younger days. I figured it was probably over a girl but didn't push the sensitive point. Jim Conley had no trouble arranging the meeting and the following Sunday we drove Doc out to Rancho Dante in the San Fernando Valley.

Their meeting was a happy tear jerker . . . a little bit of parrying and then they threw their arms around each other and disappeared into Dante's den. Jim and I spent the rest of the afternoon with the younger Jansen's, occasionally hearing uproarious laughter from Dante's hideaway. When it was time to leave they both emerged politely soused. Doc was imposing and Dante never lost his magical dignity, no matter how much he imbibed. Doc smiled, laughed and sang all the way back to Santa Monica.

I lost touch with Doc when Uncle Sam took me to the Arctic Circle during WW2 but I never forgot him or the things I learned from him. Would love to hear from others who knew him, Doc had a presentation of the Sucker Die Box that always brought down the house.

From now until New Years Eve we'll all find

plenty of work with casuals, company parties and store promotions. However, it's time to think ahead to the slow months of Jan., Feb. and March. There is a skill that is easily learned that can put plenty of moola in your kip during any dull time. I recommend two books by Magic Inc., 5082 No. Lincoln, Chicago, Ill. 60625 "Making Money, Folding Money" and "Folding Money" by Sam Randlett. They cost about \$5 each and are an investment that will pay you back handsomely.

The two books show you how to take real dollar bills, fold them into rings, neckties, animals, and other appealing items. You put these in, inexpensive boxes and sell them for a dollar above value. People buy them as unique gifts for birthdays, Valentines, Mother's Day, etc. The money making plans in the books tell you how to tie in with Banks, Savings & Loans and other financial institutions.

They are fine and will welcome these promotions for special days. I have found steadier work at craft shows that are usually held inside Shopping Malls. Among the Driftwood, Seashells and tyro art work, the folded bills really stand out. Because it is so different you usually steal all the advance publicity. The display is very easy to set up. Just go to any yardage store and look for maroon cloth that looks like velvet. The bills and plastic boxes look classy against this background. Look through any large city classified phone book under Jewelry Findings for a source of ring and transparent plastic boxes. The boxes are cheap and tables at these shows usually are free or a low five or six dollars a day.

Don't buy the books and expect to go into business tomorrow. It does take some time and practice. Start with a flock of stage money the size of dollar bills. The paper is not as strong as real money but will save you a lot of time when your practice efforts go wrong. Just toss the stage money and start over.

I juice up my display by making several forms from the realistic jumbo paper money sold in novelty stores. Often folks want to buy them and I sell them for \$1.50. It helps a lot if you work in costume and do a few money magic effects. What do I use? "Tender Legal Tender" of course (plugola over). Give this sit-down gig a few thoughts . . . it pay's off.

Send books, tricks and props for review to address below. Remember, I send a prize each week for the best tip, gag, patter, or anything that will make life easier for the practical performer.
Frank Herman, 185-8th St., West, Bandon, Ore.

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MAILBAG

... from Robert Johnson

I see you got yourself in trouble again by printing the truth. It is too bad that show people prefer to go around with their head in the sand, like an ostrich, ignoring what the public thinks of them or their presentations.

All too often show people feel we the public are suckers and as such should be taken. They don't seem to realize or care that if it wasn't for us people who spend our money to see their shows and buy their wares they wouldn't be in business.

I for one hope that you will not let one or two people deter you and that you will print the true facts more often than the "goodie goodie" reports written by some of the fans.

... from William Wotsch

I helped build the wooden cat chutes that were

used by Prof. Keller for his Educated Tigers on the Hamid-Morton Circus at the Cleveland Arena in the winter of 1938. We built them so they could be used again by using bolts and wing nuts.

The tigers were kept in a tunnel and the chutes ran from the cages to the steel arena in the center ring.

Prof. Keller used no gun or whip. He had white gloves that he wore and a sort of yachtsman sea cap with a black visor. No shooting, no yelling, no chair. Just a good tiger act.

With those white gloves he looked like a policeman directing traffic. He had a dark coat, light trousers and when the spotlight shone on him he looked great

During that winter one of the tigers gave birth to cubs. They died from the cold air that swept through the tunnel area when someone left the outside door open.

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SPECIAL

NEWS NOTES by Pat Bissonette

GERALD MERTENS is a Professor of Psychology at Minnesota State University, his sideline is magic. Jerry taught magic to all five members of his family who now do shows as The Family of Magic. They presented two shows on Halloween Eve at MacDonalds in St. Cloud, Minn. As might be expected, the selection of tricks was both entertaining and educational.

ANDRE KOLE presented his "World of Illusion" a two hour magic show, on Nov. 3rd on the Minnesota State Campus. The 1100 seat Stewart Hall was sold out three days before the performance at \$4.00 per, with over 50 late comers being turned away. The show was sponsored by the Campus Crusade for Christ.

The show is billed as a Magical and Spiritual Experience. Some new illusions designed by Andre and presented here were the Bermuda Triangle, Transcendental Levitation, Squeeze Box, Battle of the Barrels and Egyptian Pyramid, all spectacularly lighted with eerie occult canned music.

The show is themed as an expose of the Spirit World contact through Mediums, Seances, versus demonology. Andre's delivery was excellent keeping complete control of a mainly student audience. A one minute break was held during the last half for those who could stand no more of the Spooky show. Andre's daughter, Robin, and two male assistants are used during the performance plus a few members of the audience.

Circus Fans

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REPORT

BIG JOHN STRONG CIRCUS

As the season wound down to an end for the Big John Strong Circus last month, the show encountered bad weather during its last few days.

Oct. 18 - Ridgecrest, Calif. - Strong winds - Turn-away crowd for the first show. As winds increased the marquee was taken down, then the second show was cancelled and refunds were made to those who had purchased tickets.

Oct. 19 - Barstow - Strong winds continued - Show was presented in the open. Just as show was to start sheriff arrived and informed circus officials they had set up on the wrong lot. Hurred calls to lot owner and local councilman finally straightened things out. Good crowds for both shows. Fred and Fifi Reed, of Glendale, Ariz., were on the lot to present Big John and his circus personnel with CFA awards for their efficient handling of the fire incident early this year.

Oct. 20 - Victorville - Strong winds continued - the show was moved into the Community Building at the local fairgrounds. Good crowds for both performances.

Oct. 21 - Yucaipa - A beautiful day - Two good house and many visitors - Then it was the end of the season.

WANT

CLOWNS WANTED - School Program for Nutrition - Need 2 clowns right away for work in Florida and Georgia.

Write: JOY THE CLOWN
107 Keith Drive
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— Pictures Available for Serious Inquiries —

Miscellaneous

The State of Minnesota has opened a circus section in it's state museum located on the fair grounds in St. Paul. The section presently includes Clyde Beatty's whip, rigging from the late Karl Wallenda, the crash helmet from Eddie Ventura's rocket car, ringmaster's Philip Morris' top hat and a jacket that belonged to Herbie Weber. Also on display are many old circus posters and photos.

WANTED

TELEPHONE PRO'S

Ray McClelland

Jack Ballentin

Marcus Favero

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of these men or anyone connected with Community Involvement magazine please contact:

R. BOS

813 - 238 - 9209

PEOPLE

GEORGE HANNEFORD and PHILIP MORRIS visited the Stebbing Royal European Circus at Davison, N.C. the show's closing stand.

JERRY DIGNEY, former RBBB Publicity and Public Relations Director, has moved to Washington, D.C. His address is: 1803 Biltmore St., N. W., Apt. 101, Washington, DC 20009 - Phone 202 - 483-9147.

HOLIDAY

The mobile home of Mr. and Mrs. Weldon Burden, and children Patrick and Melissa, at Independence, Kans., was destroyed by fire on Oct. 24th. With the family away at work and school there were no injuries although the fire loss ran high.

The family has been staying at the home of Aden and Velma Lowry, in Sedan, Kans., and drive back and forth to Independence each day. Patrick is a popular clown, and is known as "Bozo" the clown, and is a local COA member.

BILLY BARTON (Continued)

Admittedly this brief article merely scratches the surface. Space prohibits lengthier dissertation. Meanwhile, publicly or privately, pro or con, let us have your views.

See you down the road, luvv.

ICE SHOW REVIEW (Continued)

ness, and the problems with scratchy recorded singing and line skaters who couldn't keep in line, *Holiday On Ice* still is good entertainment. Some of the problems will get ironed out as performances continue. The performances of John Carlow and the Porter pair alone are worth the ticket price.

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Show Dates

---- MAGIC ----

Amazing Conklins - Magic Show
 Nov. 19 Marietta, S. D.
 20 Wilnot
 21 Webster

Kramien, the Magician
 Nov. 19 Napa, Calif.

Prof. Miller - Magic Time USA
 Nov. 19 Centralia, Ill.
 20 Effingham
 23 Galesburg
 24 Peoria
 25 Elmhurst

Tom Ogden - Magician
 Nov. 20-21 Rochester, NY
 23-26 Rochester

FBI Joins Investigation

Questionable practices by an organization hired to raise funds for the San Mateo (Cal) County Fire Fighters Association, Local 2400, have become the target of investigations by local, state and federal agencies. Among those investigating the operation are the Postal Services, the F.B.I., the I.R.S., the State Labor Dept., the District Attorney and several local law enforcement groups.

It has been learned that local police departments are preparing arrest warrants for those persons responsible for allegedly issuing bad checks. There are a number of other infractions too, said one official.

"Obviously the whole boiler room operation they set up stinks," says Police Chief John Dinneen. "In my opinion a lot of illegal transactions were going on that we've been able to document. We're going to show that the whole operation was a fraud."

The fund raising drive took place during the months of August and September and sources report that from \$46,500 to \$101,875 was taken in. About 100 youngsters were hired at \$3 a hour to sell show tickets by telephone for a Christmas Variety show that would be held in San Mateo on Dec. 22nd.

About a half dozen adults were also hired and paid good salaries. They sold show tickets on the phone and also solicited advertising for the show program book.

The Fire Fighters Assoc. hired Western Productions, Inc., of Las Vegas to handle the fund raising operation and to organize the show. They in turn sub-contracted the work to Angel International Productions, also of Las Vegas,

On Sept. 28th, the sales campaign stopped and employees were told the solicitation was being shut down. Shortly afterwards dozens of paychecks started to bounce, some checks that had been promised were never written. The show plans then became questionable and the two firms severed relations.

Several major questions remained unanswered including:

+ What was the total amount of money raised and how much money has come in since the operation was closed?

+ How much of that money has the union and its representatives received?

+ How much will the variety show - which the Western Productions President Robert Best insists will still take place - cost and who will perform?

+ How many employees received bad checks from the fund-raising organizers, and how and when will they be repaid?

The fund raisers contacted both businesses and private homes every weekday for a period of eight weeks, asking them to buy tickets and advertising space.

One management employee told officials that \$41,500 was deposited in the bank over the two month period. Another \$45,000 was due to come in as a result of pledges. Additionally it was reported that the youngsters had sold \$81,250 to \$101,875 during the evening sales campaign. It has since been learned that the whole operation was carried on without anyone having secured a local business license.

Six officers were hired as security guards and they received \$40 a night, paid in cash. At one point it was reported the president of the Fire Fighters Assoc. had demanded that the security guards be fired and that he be hired in their place at a salary of \$200 per week. However, his demands were never complied with.

Sally Fallon, wife of Joseph Fallon, president of Angel, told authorities that Robert Roesch, president of the Fire Fighters Local, was paid \$200 in cash on Fridays. He probably received between \$1200 and \$1400 in total payments, she said, as part of an "editorial fee" payment, which was part of an agreement between him and Best, president of Western Productions.

The charges have been denied by Best who says Roesch was to be paid \$50 to \$100 for "editorial matters" in connection with the show program book.

Don Owen, financial secretary of the local, says he has no knowledge of any such money.

(Continued on Next Page)

FUND RAISING PROBE (Continued)

He added that if Roesch received the money, he probably earned it. He declined to comment on the incident further, but did say that Roesch is permitted to earn money in addition to his salary as head of the local.

Officials report the fund raising operation never was a charity. It was designed as a money-raising operation for the local. The local was to receive a minimum of \$10,000 and up to 40% of the total ticket sales, with Western to get a 60% portion. A contract dated July 7, 1979 between Angel and Western shows Angel was to receive 45%, the local 20% and Silver West Productions (also operated by Best) was to be responsible for the variety show and would receive 20%. There was no indication where the other 15% would go.

According to the contract, Western and Angel officials were to regularly deposit income from ticket sales in Western's bank account. Then, on a weekly basis, Western was to transfer the funds from its own account to Angel's account to cover paychecks and other business expenses.

It has been reported that only Best and Roesch were able to draw money from the Western account, that checks from donors were made payable to "San Mateo County Fire Fighters Show Fund" and employee paychecks were signed by Fallon and office manager Brandi Smith.

The campaign headquarters, at 231 E. Millbrae Ave., ran smoothly for several weeks. In mid-September, however, a few employee paychecks bounced, apparently when transfers to the Angel account weren't made in time. Employees also questioned why deductions were made from their paychecks for "Social Security" when they didn't have Social Security numbers and hadn't filled out federal withholding forms.

On Sept. 27th, according to Joanna Menta, a secretary employed by Angel, Roesch personally contacted the U. S. Postal Service and stopped mail delivery to the office - including incoming checks - and transferred it to Local 2400 headquarters in nearby Millbrae.

As before, Roesch was not available for comment on the question. However, Best said that "it seemed to be the best thing to do at the time."

On Sept. 28, employees were paid by check and were then told they would no longer be needed, but would be contacted later for another solicitation effort. Shortly after the business was shut down and many of those checks paid to the employees bounced.

Best has claimed surprise that Fallon was representing himself as an officer of Western and denied that he was. A letter on Western stationery dated, June 25, 1979, and signed by Rortraut Best, who is secretary-treasurer of Western and Best's wife, identifies Fallon as "executive vice president of Western" and authorizes him "to conduct all business on behalf of the corporation."

When contacted in Las Vegas, Best said if there was such a letter it is "a forgery or erroneous".

Just why the business shut down and who issued the order to do it is not clear. Mrs. Fallon claimed that Angel was about to stop soliciting voluntarily having already saturated the area with phone calls. However, Best says he forced the business to close when the paychecks started to bounce.

On Oct. 5, Best and Fallon apparently signed a contract with Western agreeing to pay salary obligations up to \$5000 in order of claims presented and promising to make a "weekly accounting" to Fallon of all income after Sept. 28th.

Some sources state the \$5000 has been expanded to cover some outstanding paychecks. Best says he is aware of remaining claims before the State Dept. of Labor but said he is "waiting for a ruling" from that agency to determine who is going to pay.

Mrs. Fallon says she and her husband have offered to cover the outstanding paychecks but the labor department won't provide them with the total sum involved.

Dept. of Labor Deputy Gary Herman is now examining and attempting to make sense of the payroll and accounting records. These, he said, came from six different sources, primarily from the local.

"My concern right now is that with the information I got, there are some terrible gaps," he said. There are missing checks, checks out of sequence and "other problems."

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)