

THE CIRCUS REPORT

Number 8

February 23, 1981

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MAILBAG

BY "CIRCUS JOE" VALENCIANO

The Eugene Nock family, of the Nerveless Nocks, visited the Valencianos in Tampa on Feb. 1st, on their way north for the Hubert Castle dates at Ft. Wayne and Memphis.

Eugene's sister made her first visit to the U.S. who the Valencianos hadn't seen for many years. She arrived in New York City from Switzerland with the Family Knie, of the Circus Knie. While in New York they attended a performance of the stage play "Barnum" which they enjoyed very much.

The Nocks were planning to spend a couple of days at Disney World, where Eugene was going to show his sister around the famous attraction park.

During the summer months the Nocks will again raise their tall swaypoles at the park where they have performed for the past few seasons, as part of the "Tommy Bartlett's Water, Ski and Sky Thrill Show."

Four days later some more good friends of the Valencianos paid them a visit. The John Dubsy family, on their way to Mobile, Ala. The Florida State Fair makes its run Feb. 4-15, where the Royal American Shows are appearing on the midway. The fair also includes Eddie Zacchini's Olympic International Circus along with the Commerford's Petting Zoo. This is the second annual appearance for the Zacchini circus (actually the third time, but the first time Zacchini produced the show for the Kool-Aid people). The circus is a free attraction for all fair-goers and is presented under the big top. The talent line-up was in CR, Feb. 9th, Page 14.

CIRCUS REPORT is published and edited each week by Don Marcks, 525 Oak Street, El Cerrito, Calif. 94530. (415) 525-3332.

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In Memoriam

CHARLES PITCHFORD

BY EUNICE PITCHFORD

Lots of little boys have been circus fans but Charles Pitchford was a little boy circus fan and never lost his love throughout his life. As a small boy in Greensboro, NC, he lived near the railroad because he was a railroad man's son, and he also lived within a long walk of places where the circus normally unloaded and showed. The day was never too cold or too rainy for him to be there and watch every thing he could from unloading to the top being in place. Maybe he got work to earn a ticket or maybe his father gave him ticket money. It mattered not how - he was just on hand. As an adult he recalled standing about in a driving rain all one day when a show was being put up and a man with the show walked over to him and said, "Son, anybody who wants to watch as much as you do is going to see the show" and gave him a ticket.

Although he never affiliated with any show, he did work briefly during the depression years with Bilroy's Comedians as a stage hand. That was in the spring of 1936.

Prior to World War II, he was with a bakery in Greensboro, NC, and then served the 4 war years in the Navy. Settling in Jacksonville, Fla., after the war, he became a letter carrier. As a father, he took a day's vacation when his daughter was three to take her to her first cir-

(Continued on Page 30)

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Show Dates

Hubert Castle Circus

Feb. 28 Minneapolis, Minn

Circus Odyssey

Feb. 27-Mar. 1 San Juan,
P. R.

Circus Vargas

Feb. 24-26 Long Beach, Ca.
27-Mar. 2 Rolling Hills
Estate

Garden Bros. Circus

Feb. 26-Mar. 1 Toronto,
Ontario

Ringling-Barnum - Blue

Feb. 25-Mar. 1 Columbia, SC

Ringling-Barnum - Red

Feb. 24-Mar. 1 Hampton, Va

Shrine Circuses

Feb. 27-Mar. 1 Charleston, SC

Feb. 27-Mar. 1 Topeka, Kans

Feb. 28-Mar. 1 Madison, Wsc

Feb. 28-Mar. 1 Odessa, Texas

--- OTHER DATES ---

David Copperfield

to Mar 18 Lake Tahoe, Nev

Mid-Winter Extravaganza

Feb 28-Mar 1 Madison, Wsc

Felix Snipes

Feb 27-28 Scottsdale, Ariz

Samantha



It sure feels good to get a bath and wash off some of that dirt and dust after having to help move that old canvas around.

This idea of a two bucket bath isn't all bad, if only there was some way to get the water warm. Well, anything, I guess, for show business.

You do understand, I hope. There isn't any time to visit today. It's a quick bath, then into costume and on with the show, 'cause we're really late today.

REPORT

KAZIM TENPLE SHRINE CIRCUS

The 1981 Kazim Temple Shrine Circus, produced by Garden Bros. Circus and presented at Roanoke, Va., Jan. 30-Feb. 1, featured the following acts.

Anthem; "Let's Hear It For Me" parade of performers; Chari-Vari on the Hippodrome track; Harry Thomas' tigers; The Winn Bros. cross-over on high wire; Clowns; The Pinto Pony Parade; Susan Sheryll's Royal Afghan Champions; The Palomino Pony Parade; The Volvos, revolving ladder; Three rings of web acts; Clowns; The Flying Ramos; Toyland Production; Cook's Comedy Car; The Wazzan Troupe and The Ramolas, trampoline and risley; Davide Zoppe's Rhesus Monkey Revue; Miss Heidi Herriott and The Chapmans, aerial number; Clowns; Mr. Esquire, The Laddies, Mr. Esquire, Jr., balancing act; Roman and Jean Schmitt, elephants; The Astros, aerial motorcycle; Circus Finale.

The clown numbers were "Miss America", Egg Gag and the Bake Shop.

Mr. Ian Garden was the show's ringmaster and Mrs. Mickey Garden was the vocalist.

in the NEWS

MOB ATTACKS MAN

(From the Tampa (Fla) Tribune, Feb. 6, 1981 by Sylvia Wright).

An angry mob dragged a man from his car in Gibsonton and beat him severely after he allegedly killed one man and injured another.

Frederick Prather, 37, of Jefferson, La., was hospitalized after he allegedly shot and killed Arthur Kissel, 41, of Summan, Ind., and also wounded Michael Grein, 22, of Cincinnati.

Prather, who has been charged with second-degree murder, was reported to be in fair condition at Tampa General Hospital. He suffered a lacerated forehead, broken ankle and internal injuries, a hospital spokesman said.

Grein was also reported to be in fair condition, with wounds in his right arm and leg.

The three men were among a large number of carnival owners and exhibitors who gathered at the Int'l Showmen's Club in Gibsonton to attend a carnival trade show.

Kissel, the father of three boys, was owner of King Arthur Shows, which tours in Indiana,

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PEOPLE

BAKER & RAY Productions have released three segments of "A Night at the Opry", syndicated nation-wide through Wheeler & Associates, who will release all of their TV productions.

The "Opry" in this case is the "Grapevine Opry" in Grapevine, Texas, and is the first of many shows these independent film producers, Steve Baker and Gary Ray will put together. Baker and Ray are the popular clown team of "Checkers & Patches" and are interesting in contacting any shows that might be suitable for a documentary style of TV production.

Ohio and Michigan.

When Kissel and Grein, his nephew, walked outside of the club into the parking lot, Prather allegedly opened fire with a .38 caliber handgun. In the flurry of bullets, Kissel was hit once in the chest, and Grein was shot twice. Kissel died at the Tampa General Hospital.

Witnesses said Prather jumped into his car after the shooting, but a crowd quickly gathered and pulled a car up to block his exit. He was then dragged from his car, beaten with fists and kicked, and surrounded by dozens of people until police arrived.

Though Prather and Kissel had argued during the evening, according to reports, there was no fight within the clubhouse.

"There was no sign of it inside. It was either something that festered during the night or a result of old grudges," a woman said.

Both Kissel and Grein were well known on the carnival circuit, witnesses said. But Prather was a stranger.



HERB MILLER, Director of Music for the American Continental Circus, spends his "vacation time" involved in all kinds of music - from Combo to Big Bands to Concert Bands. For the past two years he has appeared in England for various prestigious events, one of the latest of which was directing the Ray Shields Big Band in the "Miller Sound" for Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Kent "Gala Royal Charity Show." Mr. Miller is pictured above being congratulated by H.R.H. The Duchess of Kent.

Other performers appearing at the Sept. 14, 1980, "Gala Royal Charity Show" were: Barley, The Broadland Singers, Paul Daniels, Dickie Henderson, Rod Hull & Emu, Karen Kay, Grace Kennedy, Marcel Marceau, Pete Sayers, Robert White and The Johnny Wiltshire Orchestra.

REPORT

STEBBING ROYAL EUROPEAN CIRCUS

The Stebbing Royal European Circus recently completed its 10th consecutive year playing the South Florida Fair - Jan. 23-Feb. 1.

Program included: John Stebbing, lions and tigers; The Jolly Bakers, comedy table act; Miss Christine's juggling; Miss Carol Stebbing on single trapeze; Mary Ruth's Canine Aristocrats; The Baker Musical Clowns; John Herriott and his Apaloosa stallion; Miss Christina's chimpanzees; The Stebbing Royal European elephants, trained and presented by Robert and Carol Stebbing.

Also appearing in the show were Tony and

PEOPLE

STEPHANI CHAPMAN (Danny Chapman's daughter) and her partner, totaled their trailer enroute to Roanoke, Va., for the Ian Garden Circus. No one was hurt.

Irene Fossett with Willard the Killer Boxing Kangaroo.

The staff included: Lilly Stebbing, front door; John Herriott, ringmaster; Mike Pike and Giles (Red Floyd) Austing, musicians.

Show guests included: Hashi Dubsky, Roger Boyd, Jr. and family, some 30 European circus guests and the director of Bassie and Adriann Circus, Keenan Garrett.

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REVIEW

CIRCUS VARGAS

BY DON COVINGTON

Circus Vargas returned to its home state of California on Jan. 22, after opening its 1981 tour two weeks earlier in Arizona. Southern California stands in the San Diego area will be followed by a series of dates in the greater Los Angeles complex, including a return to the Hollywood Bowl, Feb. 12-16 and a new booking in Long Beach, Feb. 24-26.

The 1981 edition is just as strong as the blockbuster 1980 show and features several new acts, in addition to returning favorites. Wade Burck's 16 animal tiger display opens the show on a high note and sustains the excitement through a fast-paced series of turns including a 7 cat roll-over, impressive pedestal posing, and a string of five cats leaping through a flaming hoop. Five gorgeous white tigers add the unique touch that sets Mr. Burck apart from the competition. It's refreshing to see a showman in the big cage who obviously enjoys what he's doing and can transmit that appeal to the audience. Wade sells himself continuously to the crowd and they reward him with showers of applause.

Interesting, too, is his use of cleverly designed innovations in the act that eliminate some of the delay inherent in other cage presentations. Animals enter and leave the arena through a wire mesh collapsible chute rather than the traveling cages; pedestals are raised hydraulically from the outside of the arena eliminating the requirement for the trainer to wrestle heavy stands around; and assistants unobtrusively preposition items around the cage when required. The result is a well orchestrated routine that never slows down.

In a tie with Burck's white tigers as my personal favorite among this year's new performers is Vince Carmen, the master illusionist. His act is a flashy, fast-paced series of magical

happenings that builds and builds to a crowd pleasing climax in which lovely assistants appear and disappear all over the big top - a mind boggling treat!

There isn't a second-rate display in the entire 2½ hour Vargas show, but special recognition has to be given to Rex Williams' thundering 14 elephant act, the Flying Espanas, who have added a second flying return act this season; the Cimon Chimps; Henri Wagneur's three rings of liberty horses; the Anastosini brothers, risley; the Armon Duo; the Franconi Duo; and three rings of juggling lead by the Osmani Sisters.

Cliff Vargas continues to improve on the appeal of America's Big Top Giant with innovative touches throughout. Noticeable during the San Diego stand were improved big top lighting, the huge American flag unfurled for the national anthem, strong newspaper and TV advertising campaigns, and numerous promotions around the area. As in the past, posters and free children's tickets were liberally distributed to schools and merchants all over town. Tickets in the San Diego area were scaled at \$3.50 to \$8.50 for children and at \$5.00 to \$10.00 for adults. Mastercard and Visa were accepted at the box office and tickets could be purchased in advance through the Ticketron computerized ticket service. Patrons continue to appreciate the clean concession and rest room trailers spotted on the midway. In addition to the Moonwalk, pony and elephant rides on the midway, a serpentarium pit show is new this year.

A few early season difficulties are still apparent. The acts move along nicely themselves, but ringmaster Joe Pon needs to tighten up on the timing of displays in order to eliminate some awkward pauses. The spec, Circus on Parade is much too slow for the pace of the rest of the show, and needs help to provide the right accent at the end of the first half.

(Continued on Page 23)

PEOPLE

MIKE DAVIS, juggler, was featured on the John Davidson TV Show on Feb. 2nd.

LOU ANN JACOBS, aerialist, is one of the show stars featured in the circus recently presented at Rochester, NY.

BILLY BARTON returned to the U. S. On Feb. 7th, after a date in Mexico City. His reports on Mexico and other show news is expected to be resumed sometime in March.

VINCE DILLMAN, former aerialist, now works as an aircraft salesman for the Fitchburg-Colonial Aviation in Fitchburg, Mass.

MICHAELE VOLLBRACHT, fashion designer, used the theme "Illogical Circus" for the showing of his new fashions at a recent show in New York City.

BRIAN La PALME (The Amazing La Palme) was featured on the front page of the Jan. 28 issue of The Chronicle at Willimantic, Conn. The photo showed him doing a demonstration of fire eating.

FAY ALEXANDER, former aerialist and comedy car performer, is now the director and supervisor of the "Be A Star Circus" at Circus World Park in Florida.

JOHN CORNELIUS, close-up magician, was a guest on the John Davidson TV Show on Feb. 4th.

DARRYL PONICSAN, author of "Ringmaster" is preparing a movie script for an upcoming film to be called "Ringmaster". Time-Life, Inc will be producing the film.

REV. AUSTIN MILES, the Show Business Chaplain, has signed with **WAYNE McCARY**

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to be ringmaster for the Eastern States Exposition Circus in Springfield, Mass. on Sept. 16 thru 20th.

CHRISTOPHER J. DULLEA has been named director of Food and Beverages at Circus World Park in Florida. He formerly served as assistant Food and Beverage Director with Hyatt Orlando, Fla.

ABE "Korky" GOLDSTEIN, the Last of the Keystone Kops, still performs with clown shows at children's parties in the Los Angeles area.

ROBERT OBERFIRST, authored a new book called "Al Jolson - You Aint't Heard Nothing Yet" which mentions Al's job as an usher for the Walter L. Main Circus, where he worked for two seasons about 1901. The book is published by Barnes.

In Memoriam

JOSEPH L. ANTALEK (73) a former vaudeville and circus performer, died Feb. 1st at a nursing home in Wheaton, Ill. A native of Hungary, he performed with Ringling-Barnum, Polack Bros., and other major shows as part of the Five Antaleks. He retired several years ago. Survivors include his wife, Melanie; a daughter Valerie Cothorn and two grandchildren.





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REPORT

CIRCUS VARGAS

BY JIM KELLY

For Circus Vargas' dates in National City and Chula Vista (Calif) stores were well covered with show cards and there were lots of TV spots on the major area stations.

The show arrived on the lot in a rain storm followed by on and off showers, while the big top was being set up. The sun came out about noon and things moved like clock work. The first show had a full house and cars were parked up to ¾ quarters of a mile away. (I was one of those).

Cliff Vargas has a good show again this year and we wish him well. Wade Burck opens the show with the Hawthorn tigers (15). He makes them work, I give credit where credit is due. His final bit is hooking a leash on a tiger and carrying it across his shoulders out of

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the cage and on to the hippodrome track.

The return of Cimon's Chimps is wonderful. Cimon still has a fabulous routine, beautiful equipment, and a well disciplined group of chimps.

I observed the replacement of the floor sections in the center ring, some were missing when the cover was put over them and it was a wonder the chimps could ride their bikes at all.

The Flying Espanas, over ring 1 and ring 3, two groups, four in each group, two males and two females in each group. They do a nice clean cross-over, as well as a triple from each.

Rex Williams closes with three rings of elephants, with Rex in the center ring directing the bulls from horseback and ending with the long mount on the hippodrome track - really impressive!

This is circus as it should be, and a good season to you all.

HOTLINE

MANY KILLED IN CIRCUS FIRE

Fire swept through a circus in southern India, in the city of Bagalore, on Feb. 7th, reducing the main tent to ashes within minutes and killing as many as 100 spectators and performers and injuring some 500 people.

"Screaming people ran helter-skelter, creating panic in the circus area, near the Bangalore railway station," a news reporter said.

Hundreds of people were rushed to three government-run hospitals in Bangalore, 775 miles south of the Indian capital. Bangalore is the capital of Karnataka State.

Scores of school children and women perished when the flames quickly spread in all directions, filling the circus tent with smoke.

Firefighters in heavy padded uniforms and gas masks carried many of the injured children and women out of the circus on stretchers.

The blaze erupted in the tent packed with 2,000 people as the three-hour matinee per-

formance was coming to an end.

The flames quickly engulfed the tent and the cushioned chairs and the crowd of people rushed for the exits. Several of the people were trampled in the stampede.

Authorities cut off power to the area and diverted traffic after the fire. Bangalore hospitals were crowded with sobbing people searching for missing relatives.

A news source quoted the circus manager as saying the cause of the fire was not known. He surmised that it might have been started by a careless smoker's cigarette.

PEOPLE

HARRY JENKINS, San Diego organist, will be playing the big pipe organ at Grant High School in Sacramento, Calif., on March 15. The event is for the Sierra Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society, and he will be playing for the silent film "Beau Geste" which features Ronald Coleman, Noah Beery, Neil Hamilton, Mary Astor and Mary Brian, as well as for a sing-along just before the film is shown.

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Acts

JORDAN MARSH CIRCUS

The Jordan Marsh Center Ring Circus, produced by J. F. Promotions, has been playing several dates in the east this month.

Acts appearing in the show's program are: Miss Marie and Katie, with their Chimpanzees Bongo and Sammy; Jimmie & Millie, comedy balancing and juggling; Marie and Katie, acrobatics; Caroline's Performing Poodles; Mike Monroe, clown Mr. Tall Top; Magic act "Houdina" Sword Swallowing and fire eating. Jerry Fields served as ringmaster.

Miscellaneous

First prize in the float division of the Philadelphia Mummers New Years Parade this year, was won by the Tuco Troupe. They had a high wire set up on a long flat bed truck, complete with upright poles, cable and balancing poles. Two or three men and a woman were involved in the float display.

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A free forum for Greater Pittsburgh Area Operators of Concession Stands for Youth Baseball Organizations, Parks and Recreation Departments, Municipal Parks, Campgrounds, Swim Pools, Volunteer Fire Depts, School and Religious Fund Raising Groups, Stores and others having an interest, will be held on April 5th, 2 to 5 p.m., at Pittsburgh Marriott Parkway West, Greentree Exit, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Representatives from any organization operating Snack Bars or Concession Stands are invited to attend free of charge. A variety of new Fund-Raising snacks will be served.

Audience participation will include: Snack Bar Sales Promotions, Money Safeguarding Procedures, Training, "Hands-On" Operations of Equipment, and an "Ideas" Exchange between operators.

Anyone in the Greater Pittsburgh Area interested in attending the affair may call Area Code 412-787-1030, the Gold Medal Office in Pittsburgh.

SPECIAL**BAND CONCERT**

Called "The American Band Goes to the Circus" a special circus music concert was presented at Roberts Auditorium, Rhode Island College on Jan. 18th.

Francis M. Marciniak, conducted the band, and Mike Cabral was the ringmaster.


Musical selections for the concert included: Fanfare; Entry of the Gladiators; Finale from William Tell Overture; The Trombone King; Rondo from Prelude, Siciliano and Rondo; Garland Entree March; Colossus of Columbia; Lassus Trombone and Miss Trombone; Galop from First Suite for Band; March of the Spanish Soldier; Abdallah, from Oriental Fox Trot; Circus Polka, composed for a young elephant; Southern Roses Waltz; Broadway One-Step and Barnum and Bailey's Favorite.

REPORT**NEW ENGLAND MINI CIRCUS**

The New England Mini Circus, produced and directed by Roger DuBois, of Fall River, Mass. will make its debut this month, playing some 12 dates, mostly school PTA's in Mass. and Conn. Very good advance sales have been reported.

Acts featured on the program are: Walkaround with animals; Peppy's dog act; Jimmie & Millie, comedy balancing; Roger DuBois, single trapeze on portable rigging; The Great Mystical Quinn, magic; International Showcase Puppets and Archie the clown with balloon animals; Color Book pitch; Chippy the chimp parody by Roger; The Perrys, rola bola and juggling; Mystical Quinn's illusion, change of a man to gorilla.

The show is exclusively booked by J & M Variety Attractions of So. Attleboro, Mass.

In Memoriam 

GENE (Hippo) HECKER, who served as the 24 hour man for the Beatty-Cole Circus during the 1980 season, died recently in Florida. He suffered fatal injuries when crushed by a compactor mechanism on a city sanitation vehicle, on which he had been working since the end of the 1980 tour.

PEOPLE

FRANK DEAN, western star and author, was featured in a half page article in the Daily Ledger-Gazette of Lancaster, Calif., on Jan. 28th. His book "Cowboy Fun" is being distributed through the Dalton Book Stores.

KING ARTHUR, high wire act, worked at the Midland Mall in Warwick, R.I., Jan. 7-10.

THE ZUNIGA FAMILY are presenting their rola bola and juggling acts at Circus World Park in Florida. Last year they toured with Circus Vargas.

AL BELMONT has just completed a four week engagement of presenting his magic aboard the cruise ship "Vistafjord". He is now touring his illusion show in Penna. and N.J. thru May 4th.

DAVE "Skinhead" LEWIS, clowned and did his magic at the Winter Carnival at White Lake Inn, Highland, Mich., on Feb. 7-8, for a Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy program.

JOHNNY ZOPPE, Sr. is staying at home and is not touring with DAVIDE and SUSAN this spring.

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The above advertisement appeared in San Francisco, Calif., papers on Sept. 9, 1902.

REPORT

RINGLING-BARNUM - BLUE UNIT

BY LLENRAY J. YARNELL

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Blue Unit, has started its second year with the 110th edition and there are a great number of changes.

I saw the show at Lakeland, Fla., on Feb. 3 and 4th.

The following who were with the 110th edition in the first year, are not with them now: Michu, Danuta, The Yanchovi, Flying Farias, the Korin Troupe, The Richters, Karoly Donnert, The Romanovi, and now with the Red Unit are The Wozniak and The Globe of Death, with Victor Urias.

New this year are: The Duo Grzelak, Flying Padillas, The Lipenska, The Bober and from the Monte Carlo Unit, the Duo Dobritch, The Silagi, Charly Baumann, and Elvin Bale who does only the Wheel of Death and the Human Space Shuttle.

Lawrence Kelly, a 1979 graduate of the Clown College, has replaced Harold Ronk as ringmaster.

The program is as follows: Opening Spec, Circus Celebration; Ursula Bottcher, polar bears (10); Duo Krisztov and Duo Grzelak, aerial acts; three rings of Cossack Riders; Clowns; Flying Trapeze with the Flying Segreras and the Flying Padillas; Clowns; The King Charles Troupe; Clowns; Perch Pole with the Polonia Troupe, Duo Dobritch, Georgiev Troupe; the Clown Chari-vari; The Grantcharovi aerial act; the Big Spec; Circus Galaxy featuring Betty and Johnny Zoppe, Jr., aerial act; Intermission.

Clowns; Charly Baumann's tigers (13); Elvin Bale on Wheel of Death; Bareback riding with The Lipenska, The Slavovi, The Bober; Clown number; Teeterboard with The Oblocki, The Silagi, The Kehaiovi; Elephant Calypso with 16 Asian elephants presented by the Gautier family; the Guerrero Troupe, highwire; Elvin Bale, the Human Space Shuttle; Festive Farewell.



SPECIAL

THE HALLS OF FAME . .

BY BOB STODDARD

Once upon a time, in the days of the Zoppe-Zavatta resinback riding act, there was a unicyclist by the name of Mel Hall who married Aurelia Zoppe, a member of the above named act and an aunt of Joe Zoppe.

After some time passed they had a son and named him Irving.

Nine generations of circus performers on his mother's side and three generations on his father's side lived in the blood that flowed in the boy's veins.

After two whole years as an average circus kid, his father started teaching him to ride the unicycle.



In his father's act, Mel came to the point where he was to mount a nine foot high unicycle - without the aid of a ladder or any type. During the build-up for this feat, he looked about for some kind of assistance. This was Irving's big act. He would ride in

on a small unicycle with a two foot ladder, which naturally, was not enough aid, so the boy stood on his hands, on his father's right arm, and then stood on his head with the palm of his hand.

(Yes! Mel mounted the unicycle without any aid).

The popular newspaper feature of that decade "Believe It or Not" by Robert Ripley featured the miniature unicyclist as "the youngest ever."

When sister Carmen became two years old, she too, became a part of the act, as did brother Jimmy in turn. Baby sister Jeanine beat them all by starting when she was 18 months old.

In 1953 (or 54), Gil Gray of the Gil Gray Circus featured an act called the "Cycling Whiz Kids" composed of the Hall children. The act was popular and successful until 1976, when the family's love of animals broke up the act, but creating four new acts.

Sister Carmen now has My-Imba's Baboons. Brother Jimmy has Castle's Bears (Ever wonder how Jimmy Hall wound up with Castle's Bears? Simple, his middle name is Castle - named after the famous wire walker and current circus owner).

Jeanine works as Javanna with baboons.

Besides being an excellent clown, Irving is the only family member who still has a unicycle riding act, and is performing it currently with Circus Atayde in Mexico.

Irving couldn't participate because he was performing in the Texas Shrine Circuses, but the rest of the former Whiz Kids found themselves together again, working for Gil Gray at the 1980 State Fair of Texas with their two sets of baboon acts and the bear act. For their second act, the three former Whiz Kids revived their old act and re-proved an old ad-

(Continued on Page 24)

CIRCUS VARGAS (Continued)

While the Vargettes prove comely and talented in the aerial ballet, the five ladies are lost in the reaches of the big top and their routines pales in comparison to Beatty-Cole or Ringling's dozens of lovelies. Another contingent definitely hindered by small numbers is boss clown Dale Longmire's clown alley. There is no way four clowns can adequately fill a top the size of Vargas'. Perhaps realizing this, there is no walk-around or crazy number; however, several featured spots are handled excellently by the talented funsters.

The Vargas band this season, an eight piece ensemble led by Steve Carrol, is the best musical organization I've heard under canvas in quite a few years. Intonation and attack are crisp and clear and the excellent sound system carries the music to every corner of the big top. The book leans heavily on big band jazz arrangements with some classy solos by a standout woodwind man who is equally at home on sax, flute, clarinet and piccolo. Paul's lead trumpet can take off into the stratosphere at will, too.

Traditional circus music is sadly lacking except in the cat, bull and clown numbers.

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When they choose to play the classic gallops, waltzes, smears and marches, this group can "cut it" like veteran windjammers. At times, however, the all important synchronization of music to acts is sloppy. The young band can tend to continue playing a chart without regard for the need to accentuate particular tricks in a routine. Here the young musicians could use some immediate adjustment. By just inserting some tempo changes, chords, drum rolls, rim shots and dramatic pauses, they could become an electrifying organization. With just a little attention in this area, the entire show could take on a new sparkle.

Circus Vargas is a big, brassy, beautiful show. Everything about it is clean, efficient, and impressive. Costumes, props, uniforms, animals, and equipment are immaculate. Performers and staff are friendly and courteous. America's Big Top Giant is on the road again, bigger and better than ever. Fans have come to expect a lot from CV, this year's edition should disappoint no one.

The program (as seen in San Diego): Overture, National Anthem, Wade Burck, tigers (16) 11 Bengal, 5 white; Vargettes, aerial ballet (5); Clowns; Rola Bola with Manuel Gonzales, the Patricks, Aries Bros.; General Vargas as Pegasus; Dressage (3); The Franconi Duo; Vince Carmen, illusions; Clowns; Cemon's Chimps; CV Menagerie (llamas, camels, zebra); Contortion by Miss Sylvia, Miss Carol; Juggling by Los Ortanis, Osmani Sisters, Pat Davidson; Spec featuring entire cast, General Vargas and slide-for-life; Intermission; The Flying Espanas (2 acts); Clowns; Samoyeds (3 rings); Armon Duo, aerial; The Kneisleys, aerial; Anastosini Bros., risley; Victor Arata, Senior Ariz, low wire; Liberty Horses, Henri Wagneur (3 rings); Elephants Hoedown, Rex and Ava Williams (3 rings).

in the **NEWS**

PARK AGREES TO SETTLEMENT

The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports the Marriott Corp. has agreed to pay a \$70,000 settlement for offering a hazardous product in connection with its rides at their amusement park in Santa Clara, Calif., and Gurnee, Ill.

At least a dozen collisions of roller coaster cars at those parks have caused "a substantial number" of injuries and the death of a 14 year old boy, the commission said.

The rides have been modified since the fatal accident, but Marriott agreed to submit reg-

MEL HALL (Continued)

age, "If you did it before, you can do it again!"

Mrs. Hall says that "after a four year lay-off from the unicycles, the act came back quickly - but the muscles were sore for the first few shows.

Someday the Hall of Fame will have to reckon with the fame of the Halls!

ular reports to the commission for two years. In a similar case, Kawasaki Motors Corp. has agreed to spend an estimated \$3 million to \$4 million to recall about 16,500 snowmobiles and will also pay a \$90,000 penalty.

REPORT

CIRCUS ARTS CENTER

BY FRANK MARA

The Circus Arts Center, 412 Washington St., Hoboken, N.J. 07030, held its "graduation program on Jan. 22nd. (See CR, Jan. 19, '81) The program showed several of the Center's 107 students in various stages of training in tumbling, wire, juggling and balance.

Receiving graduation certificates were the Les Chrissen's (Christine Glover and Philippe Versen) in their new acts. Working together, The Les Chrissen's do a very complete cradle act including some nice wrist and ankle catches. The male member does a single trap number complete with ankle drops and knee catches. His partner contributes a tray and glass balance on a 6 ft. pole on her forehead while doing ground rollovers. A knock-away and a catch, and tray and glasses are transferred to a sword and dagger mouth balance and she mounts a globe to work it up a 20 ft. ramp, transferring to a ladder and descent.

The founders and directors of the school are Gregory Fedin and Nina Krasavina, 20 year veterans of the Moscow State Circus, followed by 6 years of U. S. engagements including Paul Kaye, the Gardens, Emmett Kelly, Jr., the Hollywood Paladium and New York's Big Apple Circus. Their credits also include

Circus Books

Greatest Show on Earth (Leiner)	\$ 7.50
Real Ringmaster - Miles Austin	9.00
Book of Clowns - Spaight	20.00
History of the Circus - Spaight	20.00
Behind the Big Top (Signed)	19.95
Barnum Presents Jenny Lind	20.00
A Seat At The Circus - Cox	17.50
Colorful World of Circus (signed)	7.50
Bring on the Clowns - Hugill	11.00
Circus (before 1835) - Greenwood	5.50
Born to Be (Mr. John's Valet)	6.00
Buffalo Bill - Yost (signed)	17.50
Circus World PB (Sci-Fiction)	2.50
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Circus Moves by Rail (signed)	35.00
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ballet, a degree in Physical Education and a championship in Sports Acrobatics.

Now thoroughly established by its founders, the Center is receiving support from a body of volunteers who already have obtained two grants for the school. Although many students are enrolled because of hobby, sports acrobatic, or other interests, Krasavina and Fedin are emphatic in stating that their major focus is in training and creating professional acts for the circus. They feel that their school is unique for this reason.

A certificate on the wall accrediting the Center as a vocational school for Circus Arts from the New Jersey Dept. of Education, supports this statement. It is no secret that many managers and agents are in contact.

The Center has 4000 square feet of space with a 25 ft. ceiling (due to be heightened by cutting through to the next floor) with steel beams. An inspection shows almost every type of circus apparatus present, and there is a wood and metal shop where props and rigging are built on the premises.

Also of possible interest to acts in the area is the fact one wall is covered top to bottom with white roll paper to facilitate professional action photos.

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BY LLOYD E. JONES

A local man complained about the price of the Oakland (Calif) Magic Circle banquet since it cost \$12.00. Wow! Well, he should attend the 13th annual Academy of Magical Arts Awards Banquet, held at the Belverly-Wilshire, where the price is \$45 and it's black tie, of course.

The University of Southern California offers another series of lessons on close-up magic taught by Jim Kahlert. Classes start on March 4th, and run for six weeks on Wednesday nights - the cost is \$80.00.

The death of Goodliffe, publisher of Abra has led to the discontinuance of "Abracasseta" the monthly hour long tape of magic interest, news interviews, tricks. Abra itself will continue under the editorship of the experienced Donald Bevan. The weekly is now in its 1800 issue and is printed via offset, giving it a much better look that in the past. The subscription rate has been increased, though the single copy price is still 40c.

Hallmark offered a Valentine Day card "For You Son" some valentine magic tricks. Three simple tricks were explained which should have delighted the small fry.

The McGill-Hull Encyclopedia of Illusions is now practically sold out. The last carton has

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been opened and it is no longer on our whole sale list.

By the time you read this price increases on many of the Mickey Hades publications will be in effect. Genii Illusions is now \$18.50 for example and Illusioniseme is \$37.50. Several of his standards remain unchanged. But better check before you order.

The Byron Wel's two volume book of illusions is again available, the new price is \$69.95 which is quite a jump. Postage runs \$1.47 and insurance runs \$1.10.

The popular series by Howard Adams, O.I.C. U.F.E.S.P. (Oh, I see you have E.S.P.) I am informed that Vol. 7 is on the press and Vol. 8 is getting art work. So, No. 7 will be ready by the time you read this and all the others are obtainable at \$5.00 each. Two or three can be mailed at the minimum postage rate of 59c.



PEOPLE

MANZINI's Magic-Thrill Circus will be playing a series of Police sponsored dates in the East during the month of March.



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In Memoriam

RAYMOND BEHEE (74), of Montclair, Calif. A member of the Aerial Behees who were with the Christ and Howe, Al G. Barnes and other circuses of the 20's and 30's passed away Feb. 2nd. Survivors include four children, eight grandchildren and a brother in Sarasota. One brother who passed away several years ago, was featured doing his triple in his flying act on the Ringling show in the 1940's.

JUDY COYLE, a daughter of Bernie and Lela Behee Griggs, passed away in Nov. 1980. She was the grand-daughter of Blanch Reed who was the star bareback rider of the Barnum Circus at the turn of the century. She is survived by her husband, John, four children and two sisters.

HOTLINE

FIRE VICTIMS TRAMPLED

Feb. 7 - Bangalore, India - Most of the 66 people killed in a fire in a crowded circus tent in this southern Indian town were trampled to death.

About 4,000 people were attending the performance when the fire started near the end of the afternoon show and quickly swept across the tent, bringing it down in flames on the crowd. About a third of the dead were children.

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MAILBAG

BY WILLIAM WOTSCH

Speaking of ice shows, I attended the World Premiere in Hollywood of the *Ice Follies* in 1942. It was at the Pan Pacific Building and had the largest ice surface I had ever seen, with lots of ice area backstage to practice on. In 1938, it was the first year that the *Ice Follies* went west and appeared at the Polar Palace in Hollywood. That same year they appeared at the Pan Pacific Building which was new then.

Also, in 1942, I attended a performance of the *Ken Murray Blackouts* at the El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood. Jack Millball and Marie Wilson were in this show.

During the intermission Ken Murray pointed us out and we got a big ovation.

Also visited Republic Studios when John Wayne was filming "*Flying Tigers*".

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PEOPLE

ALTOFF'S Performing Bears were featured on the TV show "*Those Amazing Animals*" which was aired on Feb. 8th.

MANZINI, featured at the Sport Show in Nashville, Tenn. (Feb. 10-15) was booked in-to the date by the Bill Shilling Agency of Sarasota, Fla. He is now playing a college tour with his two hour *Magic-Thrill Show*.

MOREY AMSTERDAM, who was recently featured in SID KELLNER's "*Old Time Vaudeville Show*" is currently appearing in "*Burlesque USA*" at the Sahara Tahoe Club. The show also features EDDIE BRACKEN and TEMPT-EST STROM.

REV. AUSTIN MILES' startling but inspirational book "*The Real Ringmaster*" published by New Leaf Press, is selling out in Christian book stores in both the U.S. and Canada.

REPORT

ELEPHANT PROTECTIVE PROGRAM

The market value of Ivory has soared in the last five years. Like gold and silver, it has become a "liquid commodity."

A single pair of elephant tusks weighing 22 lbs. will bring up to \$500 - an amount equal to a year's income for many people in Africa, so poachers kill to get them.

The current epidemic of "ivory fever" is the deadliest since before World War I. If something isn't done about it - and soon - the world's largest land mammal may not survive.

Elephant killers operate singly and in gangs. They kill with snares, poisoned arrows, firearms and even sophisticated automatic weapons. Recently there have been reports of poisoned waterholes and poisoned fruit set out along elephant trails, thus often killing whole families.

Today there are an estimated 1.3 million elephants left in Africa. Of these, poachers for

the ivory trade slaughter between 50,000 and 150,000 each year.

The World Wildlife Fund has created an African Elephant Action Plan. They need \$1.1 million to implement it.

The Action Plan will:

- + Finance heavier anti-poaching efforts in Africa's national parks.
 - + Regulate the ivory trade more closely, using bans where necessary.
 - + Launch action to halt destruction of the elephant's habitat.
 - + Award wildlife training scholarships to African students and fund local environmental education.
 - + Carry out action projects in each of the 35 African nations where the elephant still exists. Sample costs include Uganda (\$55,000), Tanzania (\$163,000) and C.A.R. (\$175,000).
- One thing is absolutely vital to the success of the Action Plan: financial help from citizens. send your tax-deductible contribution to the World Wildlife Fund-U.S., 1601 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

CHARLES PITCHFORD (Continued)

cus. It was a showing of Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey (1950) under tent in the Fairfield area of Jacksonville, Fla.

Charles and childhood buddy, Harold Hiatt (husband of equestrian Cilly Fient, and living in Glendale, Calif.) have both kept alive their lifelong love of the shows and their friendship remained close even though separated by a continent.

Charles always visited "quarters" at Deland anytime he was in the area, he always caught every show he could possibly see anywhere, within 100 mile radius of Jacksonville, or back in Greensboro anytime he happened to be visiting in his home town. He never got over his first love of the tent show for the mechanics of it were his particular fascination. As an adult he got out to San Antonio to visit the collection in the public library; made Peru, Ind., a stop-off point on a cross-country trip; twice got to Baraboo and was able to make his stay at least through two days; managed a half day while in New England at Benson's Animal Farm near Nashua, NH, and when in Vermont he went through the circus building at Shelburne three times. When he told the attendant some of the history of one of the wagons, she immediately added this information to her spiel. As a Florida resident he visited Circus World periodically and the Sarasota and Venice areas even more often. He was several times in audiences for the home shows of Florida State University Flying High and upon one occasion saw some Sailor Circus acts at Sarasota.

The Hoxie show became his all-time favorite the past 15 or 20 years and he last saw it at Fernandina, Fla. in 1980.

Reading was always a joy to Charles and he collected little about the circus to keep except books and the magazines of the trade. He read and re-read his material until he was a walking encyclopedia of the circus.

Jan. 21, 1981, Charles and I, celebrated our 42nd wedding anniversary. During the course of the day we purchased tickets to the Ringling Show's opening performance in Jacksonville on Feb. 4, 1981. Charles died in his sleep at 3 a.m. on Jan. 22nd.

I will take a friend and attend the show and see all I can for Charles. He was a fanto the end of his life at age 66.

books for sale

- Barnes, Al G.: *Master Showman*, 1938, London red 288 p, sl/sw - \$28.50
- Christopher, M: *The Illus. History of Magic*, 1973, London oversize, dj, 452 p. many pictures, vg - \$32.50
- Chipperfield, Mary: *Circus Book*, 32 p. sf cover, colorful cover, story of Queen of the Circus - \$5.00
- Coco the Clown: *Behind My Greasepaint*, dj, torn at top, 1950 London, 50 illus., 126 p. - \$25.00 - One without dust jacket - \$22.50
- Foster, F: *Pink Coat Spangles and Sawdust* 55 illus. 176 p. - \$25.00
- Grock: *Life's A Lark*, translated from German 1931, written by the famous clown, 276 p. gd - \$35.00
- Grock: *King of Clowns*, dj, 1st Eng. ed., 1957, 221 p - \$35.00
- Jolly, W. P.: *Jumbo*, dj, London 1976, biog. of famous elephant, 173 p., illus - \$18.50
- Keller, G.: *Here Keller Train This*, dj, London 1962, 190 p, b7w photos, written by the famed animal trainer.
- Knight, L: *Oil Paint & Grease Paint*, auto biog. 1st vol. soft cover, 1941 - \$8.50
- Mannix, D: *Memoirs of a Sword Swallower*, London 1st ed. 1951, 230 p, \$22.50
- Mills, B: *Circus*, dj, 1st ed, London 1967, sl/rub on title p., illus., 270 p - \$32.50
- Oliver, E. T.: *The Clown*, London 1st ed, 1951, a novel - \$12.50
- Rivel, C.: *Poor Clown*, dj, colorful, translated from Danish, London 1973, 272 p. near mint, famous int'l clown - \$22.50
- Spear, G & D: *Circus Down Under*, 1960 a great true story of the life of performers in Australia, 220 p - \$18.50
- Send self-addressed, stamped envelope for a new list.

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