

CIRCUUS REPORT

AMERICA'S
FAVORITE CIRCUS WEEKLY
OUR 12th YEAR

Number 11

May 23, 1983



THE FLYING CACERES

Show Dates

Beatty-Cole Circus

May 23 Vineland, NJ
24-26 Atlantic City
27 Bricktown

Bentley Bros. Circus

May 24 Victorville, Ca.
26-27 Monterey
28 King City
29 Salinas

Big Apple Circus

May 21-30 Queens, NY

Big John Strong Circus

May 24 Rio Vista, Calif.

Carson & Barnes Circus

May 22 Castle AFB, Calif.
23 Fort Ord
24 Soledad
25 Morgan Hill
26 Half Moon Bay
27 Alameda
28 Modesto
29 Sonora

Circus Vargas

May 24-25 Olympia, Wash.
26-29 Kirkland

Circus Variety Show

May 21 San Bernardino, Ca.

Gerry Cottle Circus

to June 26
Kallang Park, Singapore

Jules & Beck Circus

May 21 Grayson, Ga.
23 Woodstock
24 Cumming
25 Berford
26 Duluth
27 Commerce
28 Dawsonville
29 Dahlonega

Pickle Family Circus

May 28-30
San Francisco, Calif.

Ringling-Barnum - Blue
May 24-30 Hershey, Pa.

Ringling-Barnum - Red
to June 5 New York, NY

Reid Bros. Circus
May 22 Walla Walla, Wash.

--- OTHER DATES ---

James H. Drew Exposition
May 22-June 3
Charleston, W. Va.

Elliott Amusements
May 23-30 Southgate, Mich

Morris Fantasy Players
May 23 Slidell, La.
24 Houma
25 Mandeville
26 New Iberia
28 Biloxi, Miss.
29 Pascagoula

Sesame Street Live
May 25-29 Oakland, Calif.

Square Dance Round-Up
May 27-30
San Francisco, Calif.

World Clown Assoc. Meet
May 25-28 Atlanta, Ga.

Samantha



Wouldn't you know it. After a long drive and not much sleep, everyone has to pitch in and get the show up. Seems like they just never run out of extra jobs around this outfit.

Oh, well, it won't be for long, then I'll be back in the ring performing and doing something that I really enjoy.

Glad you dropped by, stick around and I'll take you in for the matinee.

The Flying Daredevil

by ALAN TATE

There is something quite awe-inspiring about watching a body spin through the air at about 100 km. an hour.

All you see is a blurred ball of flesh as it flies through the air.

Involuntarily, you dig your fingernails into something secure and hold your breath waiting for the end.

There is possibly no other circus act that rivets the attention more, or holds more danger, than the trapeze.

A giant swing, a moment in space, the spin and then the slap of hands on strong wrists as the flyer is caught. It looks simple - and terribly frightening.

But for those trapeze artists who dare to fly across the big top, it is anything but simple and often every bit as frightening.

One of the best, some say the best in the world, is Miguel Caceres, a 29 yr. old native of Colombia, brought to Australia by entrepreneur Michael Edgley for "The World's Greatest Circus Spectacular" now in Melbourne.

Miguel's specialty is the most difficult and dangerous of all trapeze acts - the three and a half somersault.

He is the only person in the world performing the three and a half somersault.

Three other artists have perfected the technique, but have retired.

To watch the superb physique of Miguel propelling himself across the big top in gigantic swings is to watch art in motion.

As the time for the leap into space nears, Miguel's face becomes frozen in concentration.

All his energy is consumed in those moments, he says, in the perfect timing that is required to see him spin through the air and into the hands of his partner swinging on a second trapeze.

"I hear the crowd yelling and clapping out there, but then that sound fades away when I'm up there," said Miguel.

"I've got to concentrate. If I miss just one thing, it will be very bad for me.

"It is really hard. Maybe it looks easy to some people but that is one thing I want because I want people to think that this person

makes it look simple, like nothing."

Miguel was only eight years old when his mother took him to see his first circus in Colombia. Unlike many of his fellow performers, Miguel was not born into the circus.

During that first visit he was captivated by the trapeze act.

"I was in love with it, I dreamt about it," he said.

"I remember their white tights, the lovely way they flew through the air, the way they pirouetted."

Miguel joined the circus as soon as he was old enough.

The star trapeze artist at the circus began training Miguel, teaching him the techniques that were later to make him one of the world's best.

He remembers he used to shake in those days when he climbed the thin wire ladder up to the top.

Under the hot lights of the big top, sweat is something a trapeze artist simply cannot do. The hands must be tight and firm - to hang on.

The double somersault came fairly easy to Miguel. A few years later he had perfected the triple somersault.

But it was the three and a half that eluded him.

"I used to practice and practice and almost cried when I couldn't do it," he said.

"You try and try so often and it looks as if you will never make it."

His hands became cracked and blistered from repeated practice.

And then, four years ago, it happened - he did the three and a half somersault.

"It was the most beautiful feeling," he said.

"Like if you were very poor and you won the lottery."

Since then he has performed the trick about 3000 times. His worst injury has been a sprained ankle and a sore nose.

Back in the U. S. his wife waits for his return and their son, George, and daughter, Krizia.

George is already flying through the air on the trapeze. He is five.

"He asked me if he could do a trick up there, but I was afraid," said Miguel. Nevertheless, George has already perfected the

(Continued on Page 7)

A great '83

by EDDIE HOWE

What a great year '83 is for circus folks and fans alike in California!

First off, the new '83 edition of Circus Vargas, which is the most lavish show Cliff has toured to date, toured Southern California from early January into late April and currently is in the northern part of the state. CV is a real winner this year again, plus being a surprise performance throughout.

And a big "bonus" to show people and the fans is the current California tour of the big Carson & Barnes Circus, its first visit to the state in 15 years, when the late Jack Moore had the show in 1968. C&B owner, "Mr. Circus Himself" D. R. Miller was last in California with his former Al G. Kelly-Miller Bros. Circus in 1959 and 1960.

Dorey, probably the best known to circus folk and fans for many years of any circus owner today, can be justifiably proud of his current five-ring performance (and I mean all five rings working at one time) and of his beautiful new big top which went up just prior to the California tour, for the first time.

C&B wardrobe and costumes are great and what a spec they have! The largest herd of performing bulls anywhere, plus all of the ring horses and lead stock, what an impressive sight on each lot! The band is positively the best anywhere today, the show is backed with real circus music and scores, direct-

ed by Charles Stevenson who was with Merle Evans' band on RBBB in the 1950's.

Watch the spectators at this show "geared-up" to the C&B music and keeping time with their feet in the seats.

We professional trouper can all the more appreciate and respect "D. R." now as always. He has a big show and he is a joy to know, as are Ted Bowman, Jim Judkins and all of his staff.

The C&B's ups and downs every day are the fastest of any show touring, Dorey and his crew, headed by Geary Byrd do it and swiftly so. All pro's!

C&B is bigtime circus in every way.

PEOPLE

ARTURO GAONA and NAOMI ROSAS GARCIA, circus performers, were married on a trapeze, 60 ft. in the air, during the 47th annual Arabia Temple Shrine Circus at Houston, Texas, on May 6th. The newly married couple plans to delay their honeymoon until winter when the circus season is over.

ANGELA WILNOW and her Collies are at present playing dates in New England, booked by the Dwight Damon Agency, of Merrimack, NH, and the Jimmy & Millie Agency, of Attleboro, Mass. Late in May the act will join a circus and variety show in Quebec, booked by Gastoni Attractions of Montreal.

SKIP SHAW, a dealer in stationery and office supplies, is the Chief Clown of the Alchemist Clowns of Aahmes Shrine Temple in Oakland, Calif. He was featured in the Oakland Tribune on May 6th.

SPENCER A. STINE is recovering from an operation and would appreciate cards and letters. You can write him at: 1551 Defense Highway, Gambrills, Md. 21054.

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THE FLYING DAREDEVIL (Continued)

single somersault.

With 16 years in the circus, Miguel reckons he will still be doing trapeze work and triple somersaults when he is 40.

He does not smoke or drink and says he feels in good shape.

East Coast news

by FRANK ROBIE

Toby Ballantine and Middy Streeter and Company did a two day gig at Atlantic City. The troupe stayed at the Claridge Hotel, all expenses paid while doing a stuffed toy promo. Middy is attending graduate school in Computer Science, teaches school and does birthday parties as Middy the Clown, just to keep his hand in. He reports there are still copies available of "The I Ran Away With the Circus Cookbook." The book will be on sale at the CFA Convention in Philadelphia.

New Jersey has a new circus venture, the team of Bill Phillips, Todd Robinson and Tom Cathro have formed an indoor fund raising promotion called Star Spangled Circus, which is currently on tour.

Ringling's Red theme with the Pink Panther caused a new Pink Panther pennant to be made and it sells on the show for \$3.00. All other pennants are still being sold. The program is still \$2.50, however, there is no inside poster.

Clowns on the All American Circus were from the Clown Club of Northern New Jersey. Clown Alley No. 81 and there seemed to be a baker's dozen or so.

Hamid-Morton Circus played Mennen Sports Area, Morristown, NJ, and on opening night was struck by a snow storm, but the show went on rather than disappoint approximately 500 hardy die-hard circus fans. Only two acts were out, Hawthorn elephants and Darryl Wallen's beautiful horse "Mr. Rythm." The elephant tent was heated with heavy blowers but the tent was covered with slush and ice. An offer was made to

the audience because of the missing acts of general admission for the following evening. Only 35 people accepted the offer.

It was good to see Gene Randow back in action and the Tangier Troupe of Arabian acrobats struck a nostalgic chord. Ben De Wayne handled the elephants exceptionally well, it was pleasing to see the elephants kneel at the back of the ring whenever they were not performing so that patrons could easily see all that was going on during the act. You don't see this very often and it is appreciated.

Pat Davison gave a flashy juggling display which was a crowd pleaser. To the best of recollection, King Arthur and Goldie played the circus route in this area for the first time and it was good to see this much talked about duo. The Fabulous Darnells doing Magic With a Touch of Class does not half describe the Elkins sisters' beauty, elegant perfection that brings magic to the audience in a mystical sense that drew breathless ohs and ahs. Truly the highlight of this date.

The Pueyrredons do a perch act of exceptional beauty and grace, and as the Olivers, they juggle rings, clubs, balls and hats. The costumes are good too. Then there are the Gauchos from the Argentine, with their exciting dancing and deep thundering drums.

This was not the whole show, of course, but it's enough to show you that it was all good circus. Take a bow, Mr. Hamid.

The Polack show

by GEORGE DaDEPPO

Members of the Albert Rix Tent CFA attended the 1 p.m. performance of the 32nd annual Zenobia Shrine Circus at the Toledo (Ohio) Sports Arena.

Veteran producer Sam T. Polack assembled a fine array of talent for the pure circus event. Mr. Polack's credits date back to several years with Polack Bros. Circus, which originated much of the Shrine Circus as we know it today.

Mr. Polack's staff included: Paul Kohler, announcer, substituting for Al Dawley; Phil Granger, producing clown, substituting for Toby Ballantine; William Pruy, musical director and Gary Maximena, lighting and props.

After a warm-up by the Zenobia Shrine mobile units and the Shrine clowns, the program began with an overture by the Shrine Circus Band, under the direction of William Pruy.

Opening the presentation, in the steel arena was the artistic and exciting display of wild animals, trained and presented by Jorge Barreda. This was followed by the cradle acts of The Jennifer Duo and the Venturas.

After a hilarious "Clown Wedding" the audience was treated to a display of canine intelligence with the performing poodles of The Albertis. Tien on stages one and three lovely ladies presented precision sword balancing.

The clowns came back to offer the Tooth Ache gag, followed by the Lucky Brothers Robert and Mario in astounding acrobatics. Musical expertise teamed with superb comedy was next with the audience pleasing European Clown Band Fantasy of Italo Fomasari.

The bareback riding of the Robert Zerbini Troupe was followed by Intermission.

An aerial feature with Miss Sa Sa and Miss Mia opened the second half, after which a number favored by children of all ages was presented, Naud's Performing Chimpanzees and they were followed by the clowns and a Balloon Chase.

The titans of the teeterboard, the Zerbini Family were next, followed by the Star Gazing Clowns.

The Shrine Circus Elephants were presented by Col. Lee Keener, assisted by Jeanette and Tanya Keener and featuring "Tommy" the only full grown male performing elephant in this country.

The Circus World Champions, Italy's Stars on the Trampoline, the Sensational Fornasari Troupe, were followed by the closing number, an excellent flying trapeze act presented by The Remarkable Flying Larrays.

Members of the Rix Tent and most show personnel gathered (after the performance) in a building adjoining the arena, for coffee and cake and conversation, and to view the fine display of circus photos, programs, posters and memorabilia beautifully mounted on boards (museum style) by Rix Tent president, Tom Hendricks.

This fine show was presented for four days April 27 to 30th.

PEOPLE

AUSTIN MILES and his wife INGRID visited the Spanish Riding School in Vienna and were remarried in Austria on April 30.

USDA Report

The Utica Zoological Society, operators of the Utica Zoo in New York, has resolved U. S. Dept. of Agriculture charges of animal welfare violations in the zoo's elk and yak exhibits.

According to Dr. Wm. F. Nape, veterinarian in charge of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in New York, the zoo was accused of providing substandard shelter for its elk and unsanitary housing for its yak. Also, APHIS inspectors found that the yak feed was contaminated.

Nape said the zoo was able to satisfactorily correct its deficiencies involving the yak, but chose to discontinue its elk exhibit. The elk have been sold, but are currently at the zoo pending the arrival of warmer weather. They will be removed from the zoo by May 1st, Nape said.

In Memoriam

WILLIAM D. ALSTRAND (81), known as "Pogie Alstrand" the magician, died May 6th. For years he was one of the busiest professional magicians on the west coast. He was a Life Member of the Oakland Magic Circle (Calif.) and for years he toured, playing military bases, schools, stage shows, etc. He is survived by his wife, Inga and two sons and a daughter.

Big John's Plans

Several shows are scheduled to tour under the direction of Big John Strong, whose tent circus is currently enjoying good business. During May the show suffered as a result of heavy rains and two days were lost when the lots were flooded and unable to be used. On those days the entire crew turned to and all were seen repairing the big top.

A Circus Variety Show will open May 21st at San Bernardino, Calif. and will close on

June 21st at Salt Lake City. People set for this show include: Leo and Marsha Griep, Dave King, illusionist, The Wainwrights, balancing/trampoline; Neil Armstrong, organist; T. J. Howell, juggler/unicycle; Mike Fleming, drummer and Poko and Joe, clowns.

A show called 'Clowncapades' will open in San Bernardino, Calif., on Aug. 14th and is going to feature Phil Shear, Cindy Page, Tim Tegge and wife, Jeff Stone and partner, Pat and Gwen Davison, Lydia Burkett, Jim Summer, Neil Armstrong and Mike Flemming.

Starting Oct. 20th, John will tour two illusion shows and in December he will have two Christmas shows on the road.

PEOPLE

FRED REED is reportedly setting dates for Big John Strong's shows in Arizona for this coming winter season.

Jules & Beck

by MICHYL THOMAS

Exactly who and what are the Gigantic Jules & Beck Combined Big Top Circus?

Well, the circus is owned and operated by F. Patrick and Pamela Sue Guthrie, of the famed Guthrie Carnival Shows. Three years ago, Pat got a bee in his bonnet to buy an elephant and 'Myrtle' was procured from the Hoxie organization. Since that time, Pat (36 yrs. old) and Pam (34 yrs. old) have been getting more and more into the scheme of circus.

In 1982 they took the Jules & Beck Circus (named after their daughters Julie and Becky) out for a trial run through Georgia and Kentucky. Although the show was successful the decision was made to close after the first month or so. Now, in 1983 the Gigantic Jules & Beck Combined Big Top Circus, is ready to roll again. This time it is under a 90 ft. big top, rented from Hoxie Tucker and they are using a combination of 9-high seats and 5-high seats on the ends. The show is carried on 5 semis and several pickup trucks. The show has been totally painted red and white and is looking really sharp.

The Midway consists of a Side Show and Menagerie, housed in a 50 ft. x 20 ft. tent, a Snake Show, owned by B. K. and Melvin Silverlake, a Miniature Pony Show, a Moon Walk and the Concession Stand, managed by Jimmy Kernan.

The Booking is being handled by B. K. Silverlake, Christian Johnson and John Burdette. They are doing an excellent job of booking the show through Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Alabama. The office is managed by Pam Guthrie.

The principal performers in the show are: Melvin Silverlake (rope spinning, whip cracking, gun twirling, Military pony); Joe Silverlake (cloud swing, anchor perch, juggling, goat act); Beckie Guthrie (swinging ladder, Spanish web, single trapeze); Patrick Silverlake (elephant ride, roman rings, juggling, clowning); and last but not least, Miss Julie Guthrie, only 5 yrs old, presenting Myrtle one of the largest elephants in the U. S. today. The music for the show will be provided by Bobby Green.

This reporter will keep Circus Report advised of the route, so if you are in the area, plan to drop in and see the Gigantic Jules & Beck Combined Big Top Circus. We're not the Greatest Show on Earth, we're not even the second Greatest Show on Earth, but we are the best show for the money.

Int. All Star

by NORMAN ABRAHAMS

Nordmark's International All Star Circus played Mamaronek, NY, April 22. The date was sponsored by the local Lions Club, and the show had a big advance sale.

The program included the overture with David Epperly at the organ, backed by four terrific musicians. The show opened with the Shellynn Dancers from England, then included Joe Eddy and Betty, illusions featuring the Girl to Leopard; Phil Sadler handled the clown interludes; Ribichweks Baboons, a real children's delight; a wire performed by DeMille, back for the 1983 tour was the Pork Chop Revue with Grumpy Grimes and then intermission with novelties, pop corn, balloons, cotton candy, etc.

Lee Stevens Champion Poodles; foot juggling by Miss Patti; the Zachery's; the always pleasing Hans Rucker and his uncaged leopard; Joe Eddy, whip act; Mario and Sara Drougett, aerial act.

Credit for this past paced, 90 minute show goes to manager Hines Rucker.

Mr. Lollipops the Clown spent the day visiting old friends.

JON FRIDAY

My Report of Saturday

Not Picked up Sunday at Monroe
Write Me

Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday
Down Here I'm Getting Thursday

Regards,

HAL HAVILAND

4505 San Bernardo Laredo, Tex. 78041

Franzen Bros.

Franzen Bros. Circus arrived in Indiana along with the rains and mud. But it didn't stop the crowds. It rained so Wayne Franzen told us 35 of the first 45 days they have been on the road this season.

The Franzen Bros. Circus played Osgood, Ind. on April 30th and had to give a third performance. Then at Hanover on May 1st, they had two full houses. On May 2nd, in Vevay, Ind., the same thing, two full houses, and it rained all three days. The lots were muddy, but it was still great circus.

The show as presented was as follows:

Ferocious felines under the direction of Wayne Franzen; A pitch for the show's program by ringmaster Paul Niebauer, assisted by teako, Chico and Miss Ami.

Wire walking by Curtis Kid Cainan and Miss Sherry Pfau; Teako and her 4 Carrot Ring; Miss Heidi Bolz on the Roman rings; Chico and a bit of magic (Tide).

The Circus Animal Fantasy, camel and llama presented by Wayne Franzen; Objects of all sizes are twirled and balanced by Cur-

tis; Chico and Teako, juggling; Amy Muller (Miss Aroya) on the slender rope.

Ringmaster Niebauer then gives a nice plug for the circus souvenirs of Miss Marcy as a 7½ minute intermission is taken.

Opening the second half is the soaring aerial ladder of the Pfaucains; Chico, juggling; Miss Okha, the elephant presented by Wayne Franzen; Wild Bill Chico and Calamity Jane Teako present their version of the old west.

A delightful deluge of dandy dogs presented by Canin's Canines; Chico and Teako announce the winners from the audience of the coloring contest; The Astro Duo (Harry and Amy Muller), aerial cradle; closing the show is the world's greatest aggregation of Aopaloosa ponies trained and presented by Wayne Franzen.

Music for the show is provided by Miss Heidi Bolz at the organ with Paul Neibauer on the trumpet.

Franzen Bros. Circus is produced and owned by Wayne and Kathy Franzen. Paul Neibauer is the performance director; Dining Dept. is handled by Emma Anderson; Wardrobe Mistress, Margie Jones; Concessions, Jim and Sandy Windland. The fine coloring book and program is the work of Nat Hull.

This is the 10th anniversary edition of the Franzen Bros. Circus. They travel on eight trucks and will travel to over 250 cities and towns in 15 states, with over 500 performances scheduled this season.

Many thanks to the Franzen family for their welcome to the Fans upon the lot. A fine family show, no one should miss it if it is close at all.

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HOTLINE

May 8 - San Bernardino, Calif. - Four persons on a carnival ride at the National Orange Show were dropped 20 ft. to the ground and then dragged around in a circle in a freak accident. Investigators said one arm of the Spider ride broke.

Two people were hospitalized with back injuries, two others were treated for injuries and released and six people stranded on the ride had to be rescued.

Coronas Circus

The program for the Murat Temple Shrine Circus, at the Fairgrounds in Indianapolis, Ind., April 21-24, was produced by the Coronas Circus and offered the following presentations:

Shrine Parade; National Anthem; Maya, trap, Gaona, trap, Bertini, perch, Ventura, perch, Martinez, iron jaw; Wade Burck with the Hawthorn white tigers; Cucciolo, comedy trampoline; Abulet Bros., high wire; Zamperlas, unicycles, Vlastek, unicycles, Gonsalves, rola bola, Zerbini, teeterboard; Stevana, rocket ship; Scott's Unrideable Mule; Maya, swords, Natasha, swords, Becky, swords, Martinez, rolling globes; Murat Shrine Clowns; Count Napoleon, Lippizan stallion and Lady Cristina, Arabian dressage; Satani Demon, fire act; Erna's chimps, Maya and the Yorkies, Inga's Chow Chow's; Geo. Coronas, gyro wheel and Serge Cornoas, gyro wheel; Intermission.

Roberto's, comedy table act; The Flying Larrays, flying act; The Flying Christians/Gaonas, flying act; Martinez Trio, perch pole, Duo Helena, perch pole; Napoleone's Roman Riders; The Zerbini Riders; Scott's

Boxer Dogs; Murat Shrine Clowns; Johnny Walker, elephants, Diano elephants, Morris elephants; Serge and Stevie Coronas, motorcycle duo; Hugo Zacchini, cannon act.

William Pryun, musical director; Col. Lucky Larabee, ringmaster.

Acts at Minot

The program for the Castle/Zerbini Shrine Circus at Minot, N. D., and presented in the City Auditorium, on May 2-3 featured:

Anthem and Overture; Josip Marcan's tiger act; Edwardos hanging perch; Mr. Mike, unicycle; Antonios, juggling; Davide Laddie, unsupported ladders; Elephant display in 3 rings; Clowns (Telescope); Los Latinos, on the wire; Olmedas Dressage Horses, in all 3 rings; Del Moral, ground perch; Alejandro, slack wire; Susan Sheryll's Royal Afghan Champions; Clowns; Miss Sylvia and a web production; Intermission.

The Olmedas, bikes; The Flying Ibarra; Clowns (Balloon gag); Davide Zoppe's Rhesus Monkey Revue; The Great Huberto, slide for life; Patricia and Gary Thomas, elephants; Johnny Luxem, Wheel act, and Finale.

The Ropers Convention

During the recent First Annual convention of the I.T.F.R.A. which was held at Montie Montana's Ranch, in Agua Dulce, Calif., two world records were broken by members from Great Britain and Canada. The convention was held on the weekend of Apr. 16-17 and was attended by members and their guests from the U. S., Canada, England and Mexico.

The first record was broken during the convention banquet on Saturday evening by 22 yr. old Kim Gowan, of Canada. She set out to beat the record for Women's Texas Skips that Joan Wells, of Lincoln, Nebr., established in 1979. Ms. Wells had successfully completed 184 of the difficult maneuvers.

With the enthusiastic members cheering her on, Kim broke that mark, and set a new record of 222 Texas Skips in the time of 4 minutes. Quite a feat for a pretty and gallant lady, and one which should inspire other members to compete against.

The second record book achievement was done by an outstanding British performer, Vince Bruce, billed world-wide as the "Cockney Cowboy." The 28 yr. old Vince had set his sights on a record that the immortal Will Rogers had established in 1929. Rogers did an incredible 1000 Texas Skips; a record which had not been seriously challenged in over 50 years. Most veteran ropers, experts themselves, believed that it was impossible to exceed that amount.

Obviously in top physical condition and with a positive attitude, Vince began his attempt under strict rules in order for the feat to qualify for the Guinness Record Book in the event that he would be successful. The countdown began as the crowd fell silent, but Vince encouraged his audience to enjoy themselves, and he kept up a rapid-fire routine of jokes as he skipped back and forth thru the whirling loop.

At 805, a gasp went up from the crowd when they noticed that the right shoelace on Vince's foot had come untied. As everyone held their breath, Vince commented that he was more aware of the fact than they were and smiling, continued his rhythmic pace.

When the magic numbers, 1000, were raised in victory, Vince nodded to the scorekeepers and increased his speed to signify that he was going to continue. The count

total rose steadily as the spectators began wondering just how far he would go. A chorus of applause let the young man know that everyone was solidly behind him in this awesome contest. Montie Montana tossed in advice as Vince moved dangerously close to the edge of the plywood platform.

Suddenly, without warning, the loop went flat as it was caught over the edge of the platform, and although Vince was successful in saving the loop, he realized that his rhythm had been broken, ending the count at an unbelievable, 1,814 Texas Skips. His time for the new record was a fantastic, 26 min., 30 sec.! The standing ovation from the wild cheering crowd had to be seen to be truly appreciated.

Although these two records were the highlight of the ITFRA convention, there were over a hundred performers displaying their own specialties. Never before in history had so many artists gathered together in one place at the same time to do the stunning exhibitions of skill and talent.

The list of the famous among them is almost too long to record here, but chief among them were such great artists as Montie Montana, Beau Hickory and Tinnell, Eddie Roscoe, Chief Grey Otter (Skeeter Vaughn) of the Cherokee Nation, Frank Dean and Barbara and Sylvester Braun.

Montie performed his big loop catch of six horses and riders with over 100 ft. of rope. Grey Otter, with his lovely and courageous assistant, Stephanie, thrilled the crowd with an exhibition of knife and tomahawk throwing that has been seen throughout the world. Beau Hickory, and the beautiful Tinnell, dazzled spectators with a demonstration of the trick shooting that made them famous.

Frank Dean, proving that a serious roper can spin anything, successfully spun a pair of cola cans strung together and then stepped inside of it for the wedding ring trick.

Eddie Roscoe and Tex Hill gave exhibitions of fancy six gun handling in a variety of rapid routines. Montie Montana's "Gallop Galaxy of Gorgeous Gals" lived up to their name in a wonderful exhibition of trick riding. Other specialties were presented as each roper entered the arena to show off his art.

As soon as the Wild West shoot-out, staged by Rawhide Rawlins and his Red River Rogues was climaxed in a roar of six shooters

(Continued on Page 18)

ROPERS CONVENTION (Continued)

and clouds of powder smoke, the arena was filled with the entire assembly of ITFRA members. To the delight of the audience, the ropers performed a seemingly endless variety of rope spinning routines at the same time.

The success of this, the first annual International Trick and Fancy Ropers Assoc. convention, convinced the ITFRA Committee to hold one every year from now on. The 1984 event is planned to be held on the East Coast at a time to be decided upon later this year.

At the ITFRA banquet, on Saturday evening, in addition to Ms. Gowan's performance, western artist, Mark Storm, of Houston, Tex., gave a slide show and narration of his latest works. This was followed by the classic motion picture, "The Roping Fool" starring Will Rogers. A beautiful routine, almost like a ballet, was performed by the celebrated lady roper, Cheryle Bacon, while Andy Anderson strummed his guitar and sang a song about the cowboy and his spinning ropes. His song may become the theme song of the ITFRA. The banquet was climaxed by a film of Montie Montana as he appeared on the Steve Allen show.

("The Roping Fool" was shown through the courtesy of the Will Rogers Memorial).

From Florida

by MARJORIE J. HACKETT

My fondness for the circus and outdoor show business began when I was a 5 yr. old in Duluth, Minn., where our family had the good luck to live across from a huge lot where the circuses appeared.

A brother, who is 7½ yrs. older, carried water for the elephants and earned free passes, then tiny brother Jimmie decided to join him and in trying to cross the street, was knocked down by a car. Fortunately it was not going too fast and was driven by a doctor, who stopped and brought him in to my Mother. It was that summer when Mother took Jimmie and I to see "Miller's 101 Ranch Show" and from the first look at the cowboys, Indians and Cossack riders, I was ready to "join out". That did not happen until I was in college, in Detroit, Mich., where I became a part of the local ballet

Hal Haviland Sez:

MILESTONES - Cesareo Pelaez production Le Grande David, the 53 person opulent magic spectacular at Cabot St. Theatre, Beverly, Mass., does it's 750th in-residence full evening performance on Sunday, May 22nd. Also for the 2nd year in a row, the entire company participated in the annual White House egg roll as the President and First Lady watched. Capital Entertainment!

IN THE AIR - LeMoine Trio did their motorcycle on the high wire act over Boston, Mass., and recently made the AP newspaper photo service.

ROLLBACK - Interesting, Charlie Campbell, Atlanta, Ga., based route sheet with nostalgic circus commentaries is now being published every other week instead of once a week.

HELP FOR UNEMPLOYED ACTS - Sarasota based Jerry Swartz of Entertainment Associates is advertising a computer location service to aid acts, producers and agents. Now, I can't say that this scientific booking break-thru is really a first. For years I've suspected that my artists representative was nothing but a robot!

group with Moslem Shrine Circus.

A rather short circus career has, however, provided me with a life long hobby. I am a 26 yr. member of Circus Fans of America.

Did you readers know that the 1st elephant was brought into the U.S. on April 13, 1796?

A news note from Royal Oak, Mich., (Detroit suburb) announced that a lady named Bess Moses Edwards, age 60, plans to sell a 16-gauge double-barrell shotgun that once belonged to her great-aunt, sharpshooter Annie Oakley. Mrs. Edwards says she'll take the best offer she can get and Chet Parker, director of the Michigan Antique Arms Collectors, said he thinks the weapon will fetch \$40,000 to \$60,000. Anyone interested?

Merlin Stanton is a tile layer and was honored by fellow members of his union in Milwaukee as a 75 yr. card carrying member! So, why am I mentioning him in CR? Because in 1930, Charlie Ringling brought him to Sarasota, along with other tile layers to work on his opulent mansion on Sarasota Bay (now part of the Ringling Museum). Stanton is 93 yrs. old.



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Miscellaneous

The Royal Hanneford Circus presented 3 shows in Zanesville, Ohio, on May 21st, for the benefit of the Goodwill Industries.

The Carla Wallenda Fan Club will hold a festival at Butler Park in Washington, NJ, on July 8-10, at which time Helen Wallenda is to be honored.

For information and details write to the Carla Wallenda Fan Club, Box 74, Change-water, NJ - 07831.

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HOTLINE

April - , Hyde Park, Ohio - Cincinnati police report that two men were mauled by a trained bear that might have been provoked by thunder. Brian Grieser was visiting a friend, while enroute with his circus bear. His friend, Mike Morrissee, went into the large step-van to feed the bear and after he let the bear out of the cage it attacked him. Grieser heard the cries for help, went into the van and was injured himself before he could get the bear back into the cage.

Morrissee was bitten on the lower legs and was released from the hospital after receiving treatment. Grieser was listed in serious condition at University Hospital. He received a bit on the ankle.

Apr. 30 - Terre Haute, Ind. - Aerialist Andreas Ramos fell to the floor of Hullman Center when a trapeze platform collapsed during a Shrine circus program. Witnesses said the aerialist had just returned to the platform when a supporting cable broke. As Ramos hit the net he was flipped to the floor and later hospital attendants said he had suffered a back injury. A girl aerialist also fell, but she landed safely in the net.

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Florida shows

by Circus Joe VALENCIANO

Here are some of the attractions which showed in and around Tampa, Fla., this fall, winter and spring season.

The Franzini Family Circus was featured at Fairyland Park in Tampa, Sept. 11th.

"Hello Dolly" starring Carol Channing was presented in the Bayfront Center at St. Petersburg, Nov. 23-28.

Then to round out the year, on Dec. 2nd, Holiday Hippodrome made an appearance at Tampa's Curtis-Hixon Hall.

The New Year of '83 brought Ringling Red, Jan. 4-10, to the Bayfront Center at St. Petersburg.

On Feb. 2-13, the Florida State Fair made it's run, presenting the Eddie Zacchini Big Top Circus and also Deggeller Amusements on the midway. The fair is at Tampa. A short time later, Feb. 25-Mar. 5, the Florida Strawberry Festival was held in nearby Plant City. On that midway was the very fine petting zoo of Commerford & Sons and the

Mighty Blue Grass Shows.

A week later, Mar. 12th, at the University of South Florida's Sun Dome, by Tampa, was TV's Bob Barker's Fun-A-Games Show. This was followed by the Chinese Magic Circus which also appeared in the USF Sun Dome, Mar. 24th.

April 9th, the Roberts Bros. Circus was at Riverview, playing in the rain. Then in mid-April Royal Hanneford played for the Egypt Temple in St. Petersburg-Tampa, Apr. 14-17.

May brought a "May Festival" to the Bayfront Arena in St. Petersburg, which featured carnival rides, a circus and rock music bands, May 5-8. This was followed by a run of the Walt Disney's Great Ice Odyssey May 19-22, at the same arena.

And another year went by without "Circus Joe" getting to see the big top of the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus. Hopefully, they may play the Tampa area next winter as they used to do.

Shrine Show

The official program for the 38th annual Tadmor Shrine Circus, produced by Ron J. Kelroy and Associates, Inc., lists the following acts:

La Grande Entree, entire cast and featuring Melle. Marleen; The Kneisley Duo, aerial cradle; Les Diannes, hand balancing; The Gonzalves, rola bola; Karl Mikardo, chair balancing; Royal White Liberty Ponies and Diane's Mixed Animals; The Delagardos, Wheel of Fortune; Cimse's Wolfhounds and Pomeranians; Clowns "Duck Hunting"; The Ruwills, upside down plate spinning; Fraulein Christianne, sword and ladder balance; *Great Dietrich*, sword balance on rolling globes; The Karinas, trampoline; The Winn Brothers, included wire; Alan Gold's Royal Bengal Tigers; Intermission.

Lee Maloney, overture music from circus past; Althoff's Bears; Aerial Skills and Acrobatics by Princess Morningstar, Senor Rogerio and Melle Na Jean; Clowns "Stargazing"; The Shrine Circus elephants presented by Miss Enchantraz; Sir Chadwick

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Chase and his Rolls Rotten; the Althoff Chimps; The Flying Ashtons; The Astros, high wire motorcycles; Grand Finale; Salute to America; Fireworks.

PEOPLE

MARQUEEN SCHLARBAUM is recuperating at home after a 6 week stay in the hospital. Letters and cards can be sent to her at: 685 Harbor Lane, Key Biscayne, Fla. 33149.

Chinese Magic Circus

by GORDON TAYLOR

The Chinese Magic Circus of Taiwan is a company of five men and 13 women, six of whom are dancers, who do dance, magic, juggling, bicycling, kung fu and, especially acrobatics. As seen in Charlotte, NC, April 16th, the company presented a program of traditional circus skills but with highly distinctive Asian styling, music and costumes.

The show opens very effectively with the appearance of a masked figure in an ornate and rich red satin robe who unfurls banners printed in English and Chinese; "Good Health" and "Good Luck." A pretty young woman comes on stage and waves and dips a large banner and the air is filled with humans who jump, leap and tumble around, under and across her huge flag. The rather well dressed and mostly adult audience responded with strong applause.

In one of the acts a contortionist who stands on her two extended arms and arches her back to bring her legs in front of her face and then to life a stack of bowls that is balanced on her head.

One of the men seemed to have a red forehead and early into the show it became obvious why; in the Kung Fu sequence, using a folded towel as a pad, he splits in half four

bricks with his forehead. Later, one of the Kung Fu artists will place a long metal rod into the hollow of his throat to bend the rod. He then literally wraps a metal rod around his neck much in the manner of the specialty act seen in Siegfried & Roy's Vegas show.

In another act a woman balances up side down on the palm of her hand which rests on the top of the head of a second woman who climbs up and down a 12 ft. ladder. Two blindfolded men leap through revolving flaming metal hoops studded with gleaming knife blades. One woman spins six plates on wooden rods. From her perch atop a stack of benches piled on a table, she does a back bend and reaches with her teeth to pick up a rose from a bouquet.

An orange and yellow dragon dog visits the audience and five women magicians in stunning costumes do a turn - one of them is hypnotized by peacock feathers and balances on the points of three swords. When eight people all pile on one bicycle it is impressive, but eclipsed by the sheer showmanship of the moment when they all pop open large red fans.

Chinese acrobatics, the program states, "was formed by centuries of tradition. Most of the acts were created and performed in China as long ago as 200 B.C."

None of the performers were identified either in the show or in the (\$2) 12 page program. Chinese circuses, if this one is representative, do not use ringmasters.

It would be unfair to mention the Chinese Magic Circus of Taiwan without stressing the great beauty of some of their ornate headresses and robes and the great grace of their movements. The show ran 90 minutes plus an intermission, with tickets priced at \$9.00. Music seems to be recorded and supplemented by live gongs and drums.



LORENZO PICKLE (Larry Pisoni), the founder, director and star clown of the Pickle Family Circus which is now touring the western states. The current schedule will be keeping the show busy until early in 1984.

Visitors

Seen on the lot at the April 23-24, Bert Backstein Ring 72, CMB Spring Show in Bloomington, Ill., were Allen Babcock, of Decatur, Ill., Ken McKinney, of Oreana, Ill. Louise Flesch of Decatur, Ill., Mr. & Mrs. Frank Meyers, of Pekin, Ill. and Hugo Zeiter of Danville, Ill.

From Florida

by MARJORIE J. HACKETT

On Sunday, Apr. 13th, we had reservations at the Holiday Inn, across the road from Circus World where the Circus Model Builders were having their convention. The Hoxie Tucker Tent CFA had originally scheduled a meeting in conjunction with this meet, but it was cancelled. Although we are not members of the Model Builders we decided to attend anyhow as so many people belong to both groups as well as Circus Historical and Windjammers.

It is about 80 miles plus one way, but a pleasant drive on a cool, sunny and windy day. At the park entrance there was a real circus office wagon with Circus Model Builders Convention lettered on it and manned by two ladies who between them have a lot of years experience in circus office wagons, Edna Antes and Mari Jo Couls. They were handling the registration and over 100 members from various parts of the country signed in . . . the models and other exhibits were scattered about in various buildings and the railroad cars (many of which are now vacant since the change of management, pending the many renovations being done). We knew some of the model builders but made some new friends, also, the mood was warm but the weather began to turn cold and foul!

Monday was even colder and after looking at everything and attending the participation circus, the regular circus performance and the very good Wild West Show and watching the parade; after a merry-go-round ride, we headed home to the West Coast.

Norm Riggins, who was announcing for

Joann and Don Anderson's Wild West Show at Circus World, told us he was enroute to Duluth and the circus exhibit at The Tweed Museum on the campus of the University of (Duluth branch) Minnesota.

Mae Noell, author of the book "The History of Noell's Ark Gorilla Show" appeared on a recent Wednesday program sponsored by Dunedin Public Library. Mae and husband Bob, operate the Chimp Farm near Tarpon Springs where many of your much-watched chimps, gorillas and other performing primates have retired.

Joseph Lopez and his trained monkey, Herman, make local appearances. Lopez, considered to be the world's oldest organ grinder, has appeared on the Ed Sullivan, Walter Cronkite and "What's My Line" TV shows.

Modern Maturity magazine, in the April-May issue recounts the Ringling fire of July 1944. (This is the magazine us old retired folks get . . .)

I've told you a lot about the horrible weather Florida has experienced this past winter (other parts of the country have had more than their share of problems, too) but the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus had to cancel a show at Jacksonville in early April while firefighters spent an hour hosing down the canvas to give it added weight and to prevent it from being collapsed by the wind.

PEOPLE

CHRISTOPHER STARR's "Kid-O-Rama" show of magic was presented at Winfield, Kans., on May 14th. The program's climax featured the magical appearance of TV's Incredible Hulk (Lou Ferigno).

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Show acts

by JOHN W. BEARD

The program presented by the Hanneford Circus at Houston, Texas, for the Shrine is reported below. The show runs smooth and is fast moving and the performance that this writer caught had a good $\frac{3}{4}$ house.

Mark Trellis and Triska; Ada Smieya, cats;

Elephants, Cristiani, Hanneford, Steele; Sabu, Lucios leopards; Gerard Soules, dogs; the Karoly Riders; Garzas, living statues; The Flying Braytons (double rigging); Cortez and Gaonas; Mark Wright and S. Jones, stiltwalking clowns; Two specs, one at mid show and one at finale; Globe of Death; Gaylord Maynard and Chief Bearpaw, the horse.

Novelty acts

Several novelty acts have been booked by Simone Finner Enterprises, Hollywood-based theatrical agency specializing in variety acts for revue shows including:

Mark Kalin, illusionist in "Razzle Dazzle" at the Hilton Hotel, Reno; Ioni, French automaton and Carol Buckley and Tarra, roller skating elephant in "Viola" at the Sheraton Hotel, Korea; The Thuranos, comedy low wire act and Jean-Jean, French comedy plate spinner in "C'est Magnifique" at the Sheraton Hotel, Valley Forge, Pa.; Senor

Wences in "C'est Paris" at the El San Juan Hotel, Puerto Rico; Dancing Mud in "Les Girls a la Mud" at the New Fujiya Hotel in Japan; The Great Tomsoni & Co., Poland's finest magician in "Allez Lido" at the Stardust Hotel in Las Vegas; Otto Wessely & Christa, French comedy magicians and David Rosaire's Perky Pokes in "Bal du Moulin Rouge, at the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas and Nino Frediani, juggler in "City Lights" at the Flamingo Hilton Hotel, in Los Vegas.



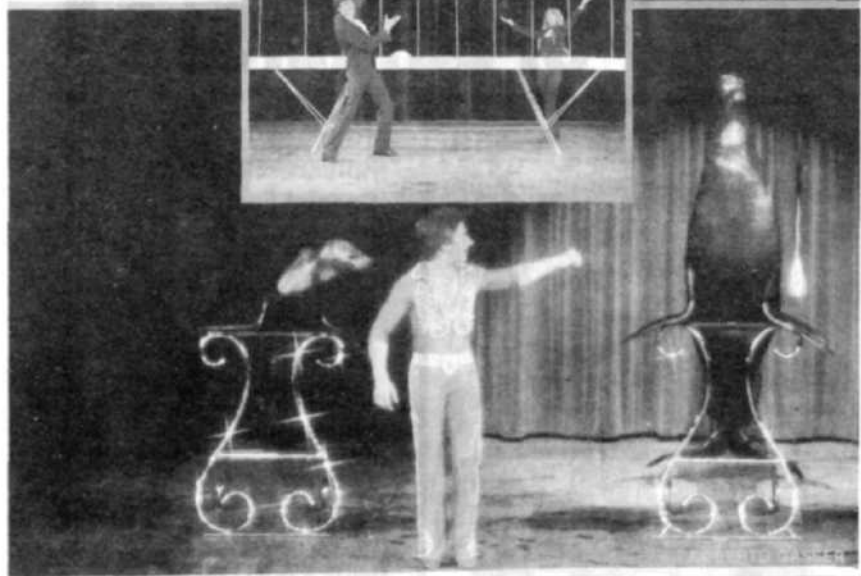
JOHNNY MARTIN



PICASSO



JEAN LEMOINE



At the Lido

Novelty acts currently appearing at the Lido Club in Paris are pictured above. They are: Johnny Martin, trained dogs; Picasso, juggler; Jean Lemoine, plate spinner and Roberto Gasser, trained seals.

PEOPLE

TARZAN ZERBINI, of the Hubert Castle Int'l Circus, GUNNAR AMANDIS, of Amandis Entertainment and agent TIBOR ALEXANDER were seen visiting the Hanneford Circus during it's Detroit engagement.

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PEOPLE

DIETER and KIRSTEN WICHERT are the parents of a baby boy - Luke Matthew - who was born on April 25th. The new arrival was weighed in at 9 lbs. 13 oz. and measured 21½ in. long.

IRON EYES CODY, widely known as the "Crying Indian" on the Keep America Green TV commercials, now has his own star in the Walk of Fame on Hollywood Blvd., Holly-

wood, Calif. Cody's star was recently implanted in the sidewalk near Hollywood Blvd. and Cherokee Ave.

KIT HASKETT, former Ringling circus ringmaster, was featured in a full page article in Decision magazine (a Billy Graham organization). The story tells about some of his experiences. He and his wife and a daughter live in Orlando, Fla.

About Criticism

by HERBERT CLEMENT

The recent flack-in-print regarding Ray Orszk not being credited with the creation of costumes and props for the Hanneford Circus production "Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp," together with Sally Payne's apology for having boomed in referring to a male elephant as the "only" when it should have been "oldest" both indicate a multi-sided facet: that reviewers make mistakes, that show people are very much aware of the facts, and that they may, in some instances, over-react.

I'm sure that the last line will engender a lot of feedback (which I welcome) just as sure as I am that I fully believe what I have just said. But, the reaction does something more. It opens up the interesting question - why criticism?

Indeed, Paul Binder, director of the Big Apple Circus, recently discussed the value of criticism with me during which he pointed out that the so-called biggies (the Broadway critics of New York City) are often circumvented in their efforts by the simple expedient of shows having long-run, pre-opening performances, thereby permitting an audience to build by word of mouth reputation. Critical value is then blunted and producers can recoup their investment regardless of critics' opinions.

That's fine for a show that has something going for it; but it applies principally to stationary shows, to theatrical offerings that aspire to hunker down for long runs. It applies less to traveling entertainment like circuses (although the circus is art, and it is business, as well as entertainment).

I prefer to consider myself a reviewer, rather than a critic, because the latter implies a negative attitude exclusively. It also implies such a vast backlog of knowledge that I doubt any man or woman can fill the bill.

Is there anyone who is fully aware of every iota of form and style that makes every circus turn perfect? Among reviewers, who is there who knows in minute detail the biological requirements of circus animals, their psychological reactions at varying periods of their lives (which alter with age, of course) facts like these that make their routines well or poorly performed, and indeed, the nature

of their lives as performers fulfilled? Who is there to cite perfection or flaw of production without the inevitable disagreement from those in the profession?

Particularly in New York City, where there is a surprisingly large segment of the public that is knowledgeable about the circus, reviews ought to be reasonably sophisticated affairs; yet they are often mere run-downs of general impressions, geared to the parents of children, citing the obvious. To me this does a disservice to circus artists, who have devoted their lives to their acts and worked damned hard at their craft.

A single level of assessment does not pertain, when a reviewer writes about one show compared to another. For instance, when the Hanneford Circus played Staten Island while Ringling played the Garden, different criteria had to be used in considering each circus. This was not due to different levels of expertise in each show. It was because each had to be reviewed on its own merits - principally on two levels; what each was attempting to do, and how well it succeeded in doing it. In a kind of sub-department, one had to consider the resources of each show that may (or may not) enable each to achieve its desired goal. I attended Ringling Red on opening night, when it usually runs longer than later, when it has been in residence for a while; but the Hanneford Circus was reviewed from its earlier stand in White Plains, on its third or fourth showing.

Additionally there is the matter of opinion. It cannot be ignored, because it enters every review, whether the writer is a townier or a full fledged member of the profession. Anyone is entitled to it, and anyone clearly deserves the right to speak it or write it. Whether it is based upon solid knowledge or a misconception is another matter. It can always engender a reply to set the record straight.

All sorts of other influences are at work behind the appearance of a review. Space is a pertinent one. No newspaper that I know of permits enough space for a really thorough circus review. Time, too, is a factor. Most newspapers are in a hell-bent rush to get a review into print. (I'd hate to reveal the hundreds of after notices that I have had to run!)

In considering the subject of circus criti-

(Continued on Next Page)

At Benson's

by LARRY RECORDS

On April 2nd, Benson's Animal Park, Hudson, NH, opened its gates to the largest opening day crowds ever. This is the fifth season under the direction of Benson's new owner, Arthur Provencher.

New features this season include an improved line-up of shows. Liberty Horses, an Exotic Bird Show and the greatly improved parade, all handled by Phil (ip) Anthony. Benson's California Sea Lions are trained and presented by Paula Steward, assisted by Jean Quinn. An all new lion and tiger show plus Benson's Asian and African elephants are trained and presented by Larry Records, assisted by Jim Guill. Also appearing Memorial Day thru Labor Day will be the Rolling Diamonds, roller skating act, plus Diana, foot juggler. One of the most popular attractions is the elephant's daily swim in Benson's Swan Lake.

Benson's is a combination Zoo and Amusement Park. All exhibits, amusement rides and shows are included in a pay-one-price admission, with the exception of a charge for live animal rides.

In Dec. 1982, Mr. Provencher purchased the Hollywood Liberty Horses, including harness, ring curb and tractor-trailer. Phillip Anthony is now a full-time member of the Benson's training staff. The liberty horses, draft horses and parade ponies are housed in a new stable located in the Circus City section of the park. Phillip and his fiancée Nancy Pitts plan to be married in October, after which they will honeymoon in Italy.

This past winter Benson's huge silverback gorilla "Colossus" was tested for fertility with favorable results and efforts are underway to match him up with a member of the "fairer sex."

Benson's advertising and marketing department have been revamped and are now under the direction of Bill Robinson, formerly

of Americana in Ohio. Many new promotion activities are planned and the season ahead promises to be a bright one.

Clyde Bros.

The program presented for the Shrine date at Lake Charles, La., April 8-9, produced by Donnie Johnson's Clyde Bros. Circus featured the following acts:

Donnie Johnson, tigers; Cradles and rings; Canestrellis, wire act; T. J. Howell, juggling; Miss Lillian, foot juggling; The Cold Nose Five act with Clark McDermott; Comedy Table act; Walt & Wendy; Mendez Duo, high wire; Intermission.

The Flying Carols; the Plunkett Family, trampoline; Miss Loralie, single traps; Canestrellis, head balancing; Christopher James, comedy wire; Mr. Bell, chair balancing; the Canestrellis, teeterboard; Dondi, the elephant with Phil and Francine Schact.

Music was provided by Wanda Killinger at the Hammond organ.

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ABOUT CRITICISM (Continued)

cism, a couple of facts seem to hold true through all of the back-and-forth arguments.

One is that if the circus is talked about, it is, in the larger sense, a good thing. The other is that the vast bulk of writers about the circus love it, and love it deeply. It is on this level that I ask performers and producers to consider critics and reviewers, to take the inevitable carpings and nit-pickings that surface in print with a grain of salt.

Wink knowingly, and continue to give us that incredible ambience that is the circus, which you regularly put before us, year after year, with such brilliance. The critics' complaints are, after all, little more than the nagging of lovers - because that is what we are, every one.

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