



5th Year

May 24, 1976

Number 21

Show Folds in Texas

An anticipated circus day at San Antonio (Texas) turned out to be a disappointment for fans and show folks alike. In the midst of a steady rain Circus Galaxy folded in that city on May 9th.

Early this year announcements about the circus indicated it would rival the best shows on the road. Phone crews started their San Antonio promotion about two months ago. While they were vague about the show's name they were positive it was a "large tented show" with the best of everything.

CFA's who saw the circus at Victoria described it as "a small show" with no show owned equipment. They called it strictly "a drum and organ show" with the Oscanian Family and some Mexican performers.

Six performances were scheduled for San Antonio, but prior to the first show, performers were told they (Continued on Page 16)

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American Continental

..... by MIKE SPORRER

The 1976 circus season got off to a big start with the arrival of the American Continental Circus at Seattle, Wash. The May 1-5 engagement was sponsored by the Police Officers Guild, that organization's 11th annual circus presentation.

This year's Bicentennial edition is a colorful one and is well presented. The center ring is new and all three are painted red, white and blue. The two end ring mats are blue with a white star in the middle, while the center ring mat is solid red. Most of the props are also red, white and blue.

The band, under the direction of Herb Miller, presents circus music as it should be heard. They do an outstanding job backing the show.

Before the show and during intermission Bucky Steele offers elephant rides at \$1.00 each. The show has a nice program book, also priced at \$1.00.

The performance here at the Seattle Arena featured:-

Pre-show clown numbers - Ringmaster is John Miller
 Salute to America - special spec
 Eloise Berchtold - mixed animals
 Miss Myoshy Amotte - hair hang
 The Willettys - rola bola/juggl'g
 Saudi & Co. - balancing dice
 Dick Marko - rola bola
 Rainbow Rhapsody - aerial ballet
 Miss Myna Moon - single trapeze
 Clowns - The Carpenters
 Amazing Alain - sword balance
 Joe Lemke's chimps (3)
 The Burketts - rolling globes
 Miss Mimi - single trapeze
 The Gasperrys - table comedy
 Los Sanchos - trampoline
 Suarez Troupe - riding act
 -- Intermission --

SIGNED FOR 77

Producer Sam T. Polack has re-signed the Little Rock (Ark) Shrine for '77, and arrangements are being made for other repeats. Toledo, for Zenobia Shrine Temple drew capacity crowds for 9 shows in four days (May 5-8) at the Sports Arena.

The show program remained almost unchanged from Columbia, except that The Apollos and Kocka Polids Troupe were added. Band-leader Wm. Browning and announcer Jim Douglass, returned after a week at Lincoln for M&M.

Alec Sebastyen - trained dogs
 Les Blocks - high wire
 Ken Willer - one finger stand
 The Flying Ibarras - trapeze
 Dick Franko - juggling
 Lottie Brunn - juggling
 Ya Ya Awada - juggling
 Clowns - The Wedding
 Barbara Tata - elephants (3)
 Bucky Steele - elephants (2)
 Eloise Berchtold - elephants (3)
 Finale - all performers

Show Acts

The Castle Int'l Circus performances at Saskatoon (Canada) featured:-

Overture - C. E. Toca - director

Joe Hartman - African lions

Clowns - The Cat and The Mouse

Deborah, Sarah, Wendy, Chellow - the Spanish web

Elizabeth - hair hang

Miss Karen - Golden Moon

The Bisbini's - un-sup. ladders

Rito Bros. - trampoline

Sarazochil - sword balance

The Circus Clowns

Marhal's Camels and Llamas

Milonga's liberty horses

The Robertos - flex pole

The Aguilar and Martinez Trio - perch pole acts

The Navarros

Les Fantasias - revolving ladder

Anita Vargas

-- Intermission --

Miss Doris - rolling globes

Tiro Bros. - juggling

SHOW TALENT

The Conklins (magic), of Colon, Mich., are touring with the Philip Morris show "Spirit of 76". In addition to Jerry and Shirley Conklin, the company includes: daughter Cindy; Mike Iobe and Paula Wilson, plus Tom Lyons.

Lalos - rola bola

The circus clowns

Cline's circus elephants

Bucko, the Mule

The Tabaks - revolving perch

Rachel - cloud swing

The Galambos - cradle act

The Vickinas - risley/acrobatics

Karl's French Poodles

The circus clowns

Pablo Rodriguez Troupe - hor, bars

The staff included:

Al Dawley - ringmaster

Pablo Martinez - prop supt.

Prof. C. E. Toca - musical dir.

David E. Burch - electrician

Gene Randow - producing clown

Robert Dunham - eques. Dir/mgr

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May 25 Lafayette, Ga.
27 Calhoun
28-31 Chattanooga, Tenn
Carson & Barnes Circus
May 24 Johnson City, Tenn
25 Morristown
26 Crossville
27 Cookeville
28 Sparta
29-30 Oak Ridge
Hubert Castle Circus
May 25-26 Lethbridge, Alta
27 Medicine Hat
28-29 Red Deer
Circus Kingdom
May 25 Elgin, Ill.
26 Chicago
27 Colon, Mich.
28 Haslett
29 Owosso
30 Pinckney
Circus Kirk
May 25 Bartonsville, Md
26 Annandale, Va.
27 Woodbridge
28 Alexandria
29 Falls Church
30 Chevy Chase
Circus Vargas
May 25-26 Corona, Calif
27-31 San Diego

Clyde Bros. - Blue Unit
May 25-26 Brantford, Ont.
27 Catherine
30 Windsor
Clyde Bros. - Red Unit
May 24 Dallas, Texas
25 Fort Worth
Europorama
May 24 Port Angeles, Wh.
25 Bremerton
26 Coeur d'Alene, Id
28 Moscow
29 Lewiston
Franzen Bros. Circus
May 28 Washburn, Ill.
Garden Bros. Circus
May 24-26 Morristown, NJ
27-30 West Orange
Hamid-Morton Circus
May 28-31 Elmira, N.Y.
Happytime Circus
May 26-31 Vacaville, Cal.
Holiday Hippodrome
May 24 Fort Dodge, Iowa
25 Des Moines
26 Ottumwa
27 Marshalltown
28 Muscatine
29 Peoria
30 Rock Falls
Hoxie Bros. Circus
May 24 Gibson City, Ill
25 Pontiac
26 Ottawa
27 Genoa
29 Romeoville

Hoxie's Great American
May 24 Penns Grove, NJ
25 Pittsgrove Twnp
26 National Park
27 McKee City
28 Blackwood
29 Magnolia
30 McGuire AFB
Kaye Cont'l Circus
May 28-29 Jackson, Miss.
King Bros. Circus
May 24 Brandon, Miss.
25 Canton
26 Grenada
27 Oxford
28 Tupelo
29 Cornith
30 Adamsville, Tenn
Lewis Bros. Circus
May 24 Monroeville, Ala
25 Gilbertown
26 Silas
Mexico Int'l Circus
to May 30 Los Ang, Cal.
Mid-America Circus
May 24 Muscatine, Iowa
30 Decatur, Ill.
Moose Lodge Circus
May 23 Boise, Idaho
Polack Bros. Circus
May 29 Fairfield, Cal.
Ringling-Barnum - Blue Unit
to May 31 New York, N.Y.
(More Routes on other pages)



BILLY BARTON.....

THE BAROMETER FOR 1977 PREDICTS a dramatic re-shuffling of routes and dates, with the older shows losing out to the newer ones coming up. The reason? Complacency. The climate of competition demands constant vigilance, constant improvement. It's harder to STAY on top than it is to get there!

A phone interview with master elephant trainer MAC MacDONALD informs me that his new elephant act is booked at Lion Country in Atlanta for the summer. TOM and POM POM will present the act.....Due to late mail and columns being written weeks in advance the following tidbit is tardy BUT.....WALLY ROSS is still floating on Cloud 9 after assisting voluptuous CHARO on and off the lead spec elephant when Circus Vargas played Burbank (Calif.).

MORGAN and JACKIE ASHTON touring with Stebbings; ditto daughter GOLDA and her husband ROBERT MELUZZI, Jr.....REX WILLIAMS at Myrtle Beach with an elephant ride for the season.....FELLER BOYS and DO DO's wire rigging snapped at its anchor in Columbia (SC). Luckily they were not on it at the time.....The MANUEL NAVARROS bought a home in Sarasota.

Understand that "friendly" poker games may be outlawed at Showfolks...NOW...if I could only print the reasons why! Hint: "rough and tumble" action straight out of the film classic DESTROY!

PAUL PUGH, not only the director of the Wenatchee Youth Circus, but its bandleader..... Composer BARBARA TAGGART has written a lengthy composition, PAN AMERICAN FANTASY, now being arranged for symphony orchestra. DON FRANCISCO - are you paying attention?

HERRIOTT FAMILY really leap-frogging this year! Thus far they've hit Venezuela, Kellner, Hubler, Zacchini before I gave up tracking them!.....TERESA (Morales) MATCHETT is with Hoxie's Great American Circus. Remember her heel-and-toe trap act? One of the greatest!

TIFFANYS (Charles and Susan) no longer with TONY STEELE...Tony had WALTER PATTERSON (catching) and the great FAY ALEXANDER (leaping) in his act recently.....WALT KING and his crew are toting around parts for his classic vintage Rolls, being restored to its original platinum finish. When the fine wood panelling is reworked and the leather interior completed, the car's value will be in excess of \$40,000.

The DANNY CAREYS (hand balancing) were left homeless during the Lincoln run when their trailer, due to faulty wiring, caught fire, burned to the ground.....IONE STEVENS and DONNY MAC INTOSH (Is THERE a WILDER couple?) hardly found time to run the concessions on M&M, they were so busy dishing it up in the backyard!.....OSCAR CRISTIANI says NOBODY has bought his elephants and he has NO immediate plans to sell them.....JACK NORMAN suffering from an infected foot.....SUE and AL DAWLEY, now with Castle, visited Carden-Johnson enroute, report the BARRADA Bros., between them, work - are you ready - lions, bears, chimps, camels and Jose does a knock-out high wire act!.....PHIL & FRANCINE and BABY DONDI played a string of one-nighters with EMMETT KELLY Circus; ditto TONY & IRENE FOSSETT.

JOHNNY ZOPPE, Jr. reports seeing COOKIE ARTURO and PIO NOCK at the PAUL KELLY farm in Indiana.....HARIETT BEATTY will play the Columbus (Ohio) circus-fair date for PEGGY KALTENBACH.....GEORGE DaDEPPO visited the Toledo date where BOBBY & ROSIE HARRISON reside. Bobby was prop boss on Polack Eastern for YEARS, is now on the Sports Arena Staff at Toledo.....BLINKO & MARAN currently at the Carden-Johnson bash in L.A..... GRIMALDIS were in Atlanta.....AURELIO BOGINO hospitalized in early May.....LARRY RUHL visiting his Muskegon (Mich.) home.....MISS APRIL (sway pole) to Canadian dates..... ANDERSON's WHITE HORSE TROUPE touring their own show in Texas.

(Continued on Page 12)

a new top

The new big top acquired by Mid-America Circus was set up for the first time at Ardmore, Okla. (Apr. 29). It is a very colorful top and looks real good on the circus lot.

The tent is an 80 ft with a 40 ft middle. It is blue and yellow, while the sidewall is red and yellow. The new marquee is also blue and yellow, and the new backdoor curtain is red with blue and yellow stars.

The show's midway includes a Candy wagon, Snake show and Moonwalk.

(For a run-down of the current program see CR for May 10th)

..... Clark McDermott

Pot-Pourri

The Pan American Circus has received 8 light towers from Carlos Farfan, and three additional weeks have been added to the tour

Don Stambaugh and Billy Ford are home after a busy clowning romp in Eastern Shopping Malls.

Pat Bissonette, was a guest clown with the Royal Hanneford Circus, recently.

Clown Chuck Sateja and his Rand McNally map are off on the road again for Jimmy Douglass.

Gina Medro will not be with her father and brothers this season.

..... Mike Naughton

FLASH!

Generally reliable sources report the Canadian government is withholding 15% of salaries received in that country for tax purposes.

It is possible to obtain a refund, but acts must file a tax return in Canada to become eligible for such a refund.

Miscellaneous

Circus fans at Terre Haute (Ind) are planning to provide a corn bread and bean dinner for Hoxie Bros. Circus on June 5th.

SAWDUST TRAIL

Vicky Stebbing, her daughter and two week old son, joined the Stebbing Family Circus at Monroe (La) and needless to say the event made grandparents Lilly and Francis very happy.

Word that Showtime USA has folded leaves a zillion questions unanswered, as acts were left without funds and what appeared to be a big operation collapsed. This reporter has folks interested in the equipment and dates if anyone can provide information on the show it will be appreciated.

This has been a busy circus year for Louisiana with such shows as Fisher Bros., Mid America, Showtime USA, Dailey Bros., Dixie Bros., Eddie Zacchini, Paul Kaye Clyde Bros., Stebbing Royal European, King Bros, and George Matthews all playing the state.

Reports indicate the Area 1 and 4 Shrines have been sold on having two shrines to be in the spring, the other in the fall. Shriners in Northern Louisiana are grumbling!

Do Do, the Clown, has a full schedule this year and has been working malls, zoo, downtown promotions, shows and special events. This has resulted in a turn down of some offers.

-M. L. Dupont

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PEOPLE

OLEG POPOV, famed Russian Circus Clown, was pictured by AP at New York's Lincoln Center just this past week.

JIM DANDY, unicyclist, was with the Happytime Circus for its date at Terra Linda, Calif.

JON FRIDAY recently announced several shows for Patterson Bros. in Michigan and will join the Hanneford Family Circus at Storyland USA Park, near Lake George, N.Y. for the summer.

FRANK and BERNICE DEAN have been visiting shows in Southern California before starting the summer tour with Happytime Circus

CLOWNS

Clowns appearing with the Clyde Bros. Circus during its recent Milwaukee and St. Paul dates were: Steve Baker, Gary Ray, Brad Ward, Blinko and Maran, John Mason, Chester and Joe Sherman and Abie Goldstein.

CHAPPIE FOX has been named Director of Research and Program Development for RBBB with headquarters at the show's office in Washington, DC.

RAYMOND DUKE, producing clown on Fisher Bros., has an alley that includes Billy Loder, Mike Gasca and Ray's 7 year old grandson, who also works in the trampoline number.

COL. BILL WANTS ACTS



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In Memoriam

Laura Mae Anderson (82), widow of the late Fred "Bud" Anderson, died April 2nd at Emporia, Kans. She and her husband operated truck shows, starting in the 1930's. She continued to operate their show after Bud's death, until she retired in 1954. Survivors include her son, Norman, two grandchildren, four brothers and a sister.

PEOPLE

IRVIN FELD, RBBB President, was recently honored by the Florida Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, in recognition of the circus' contribution to America's Bicentennial.

The RUSS SAUNDERS TRIO recently worked for the Boys Christian League at Arcadia, Calif.

KENT GHIRARD and his "Alahaland Pony Circus" was featured in the latest White T magazine

Show Report

The loss of about \$50,000 in equipment occurred at Cedartown (Ga.) on Apr. 30 when the Lewis Bros. light plant truck burned to the ground. The truck carried two diesel units, electrical cables and lights.

A backfire ignited the gas tank which exploded and engulfed the truck in flames. A cage unit, being towed by the truck was undamaged.

Firemen from Cedartown refused to touch the truck because it was outside the city limits. The County units arrived shortly afterwards, but it was too late.

The loss could have been eliminated, says Lewis, had the Cedartown Fire Dept. hurried to the call. "I would have been happy to pay them for their services if they had just really tried to say the truck."



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H-M SHOW

After seeing the Hamid-Morton Circus at Cherry Hill (NJ) May 7-9, I just have to say it is the best circus for its size anywhere. The show was sponsored by the Cherry Hill Fire Co., and drew good crowds for every performance.

All rigging and costumes were brand new and they have the latest in "motorized" aerial rigging over the center ring. It goes up and down and folds away easily and is an excellent idea.

The program included: Bill Golden, 13 tigers, 1 lion; clowns, ladder rock; Lleria Cuneo, white tiger and elephant; Mile. Yvette, loop-the-loop; Conga, gorilla parody; La Mafalda, sword balance; Miss Wanda Ward, aerialist; the baby elephants; Clowns, The Dentist; Atos Troupe, Teeterboard; The Pirates of the Sky; The Flying Valentines; Klausen's Bears; Clowns, Hair Problems; Msr. Raymond, slack wire; the Hamid-Morton elephants and the Hallelujah Finale.

—Frank Hoopes

Mich. Run

The First-of-May found Voorheis Bros. Indoor Circus nearing the end of its annual Spring Tour, playing to two full houses in the Belleville (Mich) high school gym.

The performance was a well rounded one with aerial, ground and animal acts, and featured: Peanuts, the clown, come-in; Rolandos, juggling; Harry Tod, dogs; Peanuts, balancing; The Barrys, trapeze; Peanuts, magic; Irv Lang, chimps; Miller Bros., cradle; Marcelli Marcellis, wire; Daniels, comedy juggling; Peanuts, balloons and Targa, gorilla act.

—George Da Deppo

School Program

Ned Locke, announcer for the Bozo TV Show, of Chicago, produced a school program at Lincoln Way High School, New Lenox, Ill., on April 10th. Included in the line-up were: Apollos; Baby Don-di, The Wainwrights, Martin Lamberty, Jr. Ned Locke and Cooky, a TV clown, did special numbers throughout the program.

....BB

PEOPLE

ANGELA WILNOW and her col-lies, touring with Holiday Hippodrome, are in their second year on that show.

On or Off?

Several major dates in Louisiana have been shuffled and re-shuffled by RBBB as they attempt to work out a suitable plan for coverage of the state.

Originally scheduled to play the Super Dome at New Orleans those plans were cancelled in favor of Monroe (June 25-27) and Lake Charles (June 29-30). Later, after window cards and flyers had been prepared, the above two cities were cancelled out, with a report the show would play the Super Dome on June 25-30.

Problems over percentages, concessions and security at the Dome caused the first switch, informants report. Now, apparently those problems have been worked out to everyone's satisfaction.

..... M. L. Dupont

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FLOATS

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Wheaton, Ill.
June 23-27

Flying Again

For its recent Monroe (La.) engagement the Olympic Int'l Circus had booked the Flying Steeles but when show time arrived only one member of the troupe was on hand. Fortunately, there was a flying rigging ready, but still Eddie Zacchini was in a bind.

After a quick conference it was agreed that Fay Alexander, Walter Patterson and Eddie Foy would put an act together. Patterson would be the catcher, his daughter Lorelei, would style,

PEOPLE

KAREN LATHROP is breaking a llama act for the Lewis Bros. Circus program.

HAROLD BARNES will provide the tent for Sam Polack's June 23-27 date at Wheaton, Ill.

with Fay doing simple tricks.

They worked well together and everyone was pleased with the act. Only two tricks were missed during the three shows.

..... M. L. Dupont

BILLY BARTON (Continued)

JOHNNY ZOPPE, Jr. purchased 18 rockets (surplus) from Uncle Sam, has them warehoused in Dallas, will utilize them in a BIG production next season. Reports one of his Space Ships collided with an electric cable opening night at Nashville which was shredded by the propeller blade. ALL remote control to the ground was dead. They landed with the prop frozen at full throttle. "We could have been badly hurt to say the least," Johnny told me...AND...during a Shrine clown number a shot gun blast hit and burned the Flying Lar-Ray's net.

T'is rumored that LION COUNTRY in L.A. has abandoned plans for a summer circus - economic reasons, I heard.....The Juggling VILLAMS have rhinestoned their juggling clubs - dazzling!EMIL GOETCHI, Jr. (DeMille) subbed for Kenny in the JERICO LEAPS who was out due to a sprained ankle.....JIMMY FOSSETT purchased a new GIRL IN THE MOON aerial apparatus from England which his wife is performing on.....Lovely letter from HELEN WALLEENDA says: "You wouldn't know me now with all the gray hair Karl gives me doing those stunts! He's only happy when his feet are on the wire." Helen, we all love what we do best!

Are Faces RED: JIM DOUGLASS, who prides himself on NOT mixing up his announcements pulled a real boner in Lincoln when he announced MISS Grace MacIntosh and MR. Charles Marine in reverse order and gender! Oh well, Jim, think nothing of it. M.C. RAY ORSZAK, debuting with Royal Hanneford, touted their 1976 show as the ALL NEW, 1967 EDITION!

See you down the road, luvs.

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KAYE CIRCUS

The program as presented by the Kaye Cont'l Circus at Shreveport (La.) on May 7-9 included: Jack Cervone, bandleader; Spec, Circus on Parade; Ramon, balance trapeze; Roberto, cloud swing; Raul, loop; Baron Von Uhl, wild animals; Jupiter Trio, triple trapeze; Ron Perry, Randy & Sylvia and Paulette Braunn, juggling Kaye's elephants; Oscar's elephants; Arturo, heel-and-toe trapeze; Miss Loná's Pets; Katinaka's Kanines; The Cold Nose Five; Feller Boys and Do Do, wire; The Leighs, space wheel; The Flying

Ramos; Baby Dolly, elephant; Antale's chimps; Miss Peggy's Pets; Gene Mendez, high wire; Les Thinis, The Hernandez Troupe, Les Mitzis, trampoline; Nock Bros. sway poles; Bicentennial Finale.

The clowns were: Mike Klucker, Dukey Anderson, June Dewsbury, Koko, Jimbo.

During the engagement a special hospital show was presented featuring: Ron Perry, juggler; Cold Nose Five, dog act; Les Thinis, trampoline; Antalek's chimps Jacob's elephants and several of the clown numbers.

KELLY TOUR

The Emmett Kelly Jr. Circus played a series of one dayers starting April 19th at Reading (Mass), closing April 25 at Cumberland (Md). Reports indicate the show uses a flashy backdrop, with entrance curtain and a lighted runway extending from one ring.

Appearing on the dates were: Satani Demon, Ashton Family, Mickey Antalek's chimps, Tongo, Tony Fossett, Apollos, Baby Dondi, Cimse's dogs, plus an illusion act and rola bola number.

Of note is the clever comedy of J. P. Theron who introduces a "comedy tank" and does a parody on Gen. Patton. Featured, of course, is Emmett Kelly, Jr.

.... BB

So. Cal. Date

The Bicentennial presentation of Yerke's Aerial Thrill and Stunt Show, presented in Southern California on May 8th, was sponsored by the Hi Desert Theatre of Performing Arts.

The program, with Parley Baer, announcer, featured: Thrills from "Towering Inferno" and Miss Astra (dive); An aerial display of single trapeze numbers; The Lindens, plate spinners; Clown number; Buff Brady, rope spinning; Wild West stunt men; Buff Brady, Blue Rhinehart and Bonnie Williams, trick balancing; Aerialovelies, web display; The Flying Artons; the clowns; "Planet of the Apes" with Zira and Cornelius, and Daryl, trampoline number.

-Frank Dean

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Maine Dates

The concept of the one ring circus is almost universally admired, but one of the few areas of our business where it is paid more than lip service is the run of Shrine dates in Maine, produced by Wayne McCary, and familiarly known as "The Maine Dates".

Playing armories and auditoriums, the show opened for Kora Temple with two days at the Augusta Civic Center, April 16-17, moved to Portland April 19-21, then played Lewiston, April 23-24. Jumping up north for Ana Temple the show made a four day run at the Caribou, Maine Armory, April 29-May 2, and wound up the tour at the Bangor Auditorium, May 7-9.

Despite the obvious problems inherent in a one-ring format, the two hour program ran smoothly with no stalls or stage-waits, thanks to careful pre-planning by the producer and the efforts of Ray Taylor's alert young prop crew. One of the chief factors in the show's strength was the music of Fred Petra's five piece band, all superb musicians, most of whom play two or more instruments as needed. Where else can you hear two flugel horns harmonizing counter-melodies in a circus band?

The show's appearance was enhanced this year by the purchase of new extra lighting and the addition of sparkling green carpet framing the ring.

The announcer was Charley Van Buskirk, and the concession department was very capably run by Mrs. Diana Bedwell.

PROGRAM:

Overture—Patriotic Medley—Fred Petra & Shrine Circus Band

National Anthem

Spec—Circus Salute to the Spirit of '76

Webs—Susan & Sonja Zoppe

Albert & Jeanette Rix with 10 mixed bears—steel arena

Single Trapeze—The Satin Doll, Miss Carol (Wainwright)

Al Vibel's Liberty Ponies

Juggling Almiros

Clown Safe Gag—Producing clown Frank Hannon

(Hopo), with Glen Butler (Flippo), Don

Bridwell (Whizzer), Shane Wainwright (Pinochio), & Dick Hurtabise (Little Casper)

Gutis Family—Jungle Parody Comedy

Princess Sonja (Zoppe) and her Indian Aerial Fantasy

INTERMISSION

Tampoline—The Wainwrights

Comedy Platespinning—Rosita & Alberto (Almiro)

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Youth Circus

The 1976 edition of the Hiller Old Tyme Circus sparkled with Bi-centennial glitter. Producer Bob Eller's troupe of 37 mini stars, ranging in age from 7 to 14, gave an amazingly professional performance which was a tribute to American youth.

The five performances were well patronized and were presented in the Lampher High School Gym at Madison Heights, Mich.

The program included: Opening Tournament "Spirit of '76"; Mini-tramp; Unicycles; Rolling globe; Teeterboard; Singe trapeze (5 girls); Clowns; Juggling and Balance; Illusionist; Acrobats; Juggling torches; Spanish web (3) girls; Hand balancing; Clowns; Three high; Tumbling (entire show group); Risley; Double Trapeze (5 groups); Clowns; rola bola (3) Tight wire; swinging ladders (9) and the special Finale.

..... George Da Deppo

Johnny Zoppe Rhesus Monkey Revue

Clown Laundry Gag—Hopo & Whizzer

Vidbel Elephants

Karl Wallendas & the Great Wallendas

The Rix Bears are favorites on these dates, and in the two years since their last appearance here have jazzed-up the act with new music, some new bears, props in a mod color scheme, and a mirror ball.

The Vidbels' baby elephant, Dandelion, is still diminutive enough to retain tremendous appeal, but has been with the act long enough now to perform like a seasoned trouper.

Princess Sonja (Zoppe) aerial spectacular ends the first half of the show on a high note, while Karl and the Wallendas live up to the magic of their name to provide the show with a really powerful closing.

This same basic show, with the single-ring format will also be a featured attraction of the Bicentennial Edition of the Eastern States Exposition at West Springfield, Mass., September 16-19.

—Charley Van Buskirk

Circus Suarez

..... by Alberto Rubio

Circo Hnos. Suarez performed at Tepic, Mexico, Feb. 14-18. This circus is one of the larger traveling shows of Mexico. It was founded in 1872 at Guadalajara, Mexico. Since then its route has taken it throughout Central and South America and Mexico, and many of its families have performed in the U.S. Currently all the sons of show manager, Sr. Crispin Suarez, are presenting a flying act for a circus touring in Brazil.

The show's big truck lorries are very brightly painted and the show's two large tents (big top and menagerie/side show) are in good condition. Circus Suarez is carrying several animals (5 elephants, 2 camels, 1 hippo, 3 percheron horses, 3 chimps, 3 lions, 3 tigers and several small animals

The big top has two rings, but they use one ring most of the time. Following is the program: Spec, parade of animals and performers; Clowns, Palmatoria and Cascarita (from Chile) in a ladder gag; Raul Suarez, 2 camels

and a pony; Diana King, mind reader; Clowns, Batman and Robin; Raul Suarez and baby elephant "Jimmy"; Clowns, musical number; Monica, single trapeze; Los Yandel Troupe of Flyers; Clown monolog of jokes; Ray Grant, magic; Alexander Duo's Space Odyssey(it is spec, with beautiful props and lighting, etc.

After intermission came Los Astros Flyers; Clown poems; The Marletti Duo, double trapeze; Emanuel Polanco and his chimps; Gualberto Rios, slide for life; Christi Macklein and elephants (5) with Raul Suarez and then the Finale big spec of all performers.

show day

Two SRO houses greeted the Clyde Bros.-Carden-Johnson Shrine Int'l Circus at Menominee (Mich) on May 7th, the first stop on their six city swing through the Upper Penninsula of Michigan. The seating capacity at the high school gym is 3800 and both performances had youngsters sitting on mats.

The program ran 2½ hours and was well received. Show's band,

organ and drums, was directed by Mike Morgan, and Andrew Kirby was the ringmaster.

The show's program included a Historical spec; Lou Regan's seven tigers; Maya and Robert, sword balancing; Cucciolo, trampoline; 4 llamas and 3 ponies (2 rings); Clowns; rola bola; Clowns; Princess Kayleah, doves; Maya, single trapeze; Scott's Unridable Mule; Kirby's Chimps; Eddie & Eddie; Acrobatics; Clowns; Vivian's Boxer Dogs; Zerbini Bros., teeterboard; elephants (3); Finale.

..... Bill King

Clown College

"The Midwest Clown College" now in its third year in the metropolitan Chicago area, was started in 1974. Today the college is taught on two Chicago campuses and one in Palos Hills.

The clown courses run from either to ten weeks and are constantly taught. The courses include: lectures, demonstrations, films and actual work on make-up, techniques, props, clown suits, live shows and related subjects.

The school, headed by "Cosmo" (C. E. Spielman), includes Felix, the Cop Clown (R. J. Spielman), plus numerous speakers. Ten to 15 students attend each of the two hour classes during the week.

Fourteen students will be graduating from the "Clownology" course on a Chicago campus on May 27th. The occasion will mark a special program featuring each

(Continued on Page 17)

CIRCUS FOLDS (Continued)
could not be paid for dates at Laredo, Alice, Kingsville and Victoria. Whatever the reason, says Rod Stinson, of the San Antonio Express, the matter will no doubt go into the courts. On May 13th, Rod devoted his entire column to the circus story.

Rod reports the circus folks consisted of eight couples, two single men, several children and three elephants. A local investigator, Bob Lucas, he says, was trying to help them and secure some paid dates for them.

San Antonio TV, radio and newspapers told how the circus had folded, leaving the acts stranded. At least one TV report included a story about the show promoter who is being sought by local authorities. News reports also indicated some \$15,000 from advance ticket sale was missing.



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HOXIE BROS. IN REVIEW

By Billy Barton

Circleville, Ohio, May 9: Set up on a grassy lot under sunny skies, the Hoxie Circus generated a true "old-time" circus nostalgia that explains why the charm of the Big Top will never completely be replaced by super-structured arenas.

The blue and white striped round top, now in its second year, is in first class shape and for sight lines and audience enjoyment this "theatre-in-the-round" style can't be beaten. Gone are the antiquated "chandelier lights" on the center poles. Quartz ring lights and light-banks suspended between the first set of quarter poles concentrate on the track and in the one ring.

A flying act frame, from which all riggings hang, spans the ring with the high wire crossing under it. The walking wire is attached and dismantled during the performance, the platform poles held secure by safety lines. The cage, as it is struck, is loaded on a large dolly, wheeled out of sight; and the stage, used for the bike act, is set quickly in interlocking sections, just as quickly taken up. Thus the performance moves with speed, pushed along by Ron Dyer's prop crew and further propelled by Phil Chandler's on-the-button announcements and quick banter with Tom Sink's clown specialties and Gary Henry's comedy pony turn.

If the innumerable "commercials" during the show are jarring, and they are, at least Chandler delivers them with dispatch and, as Hoxie Tucker says, "They help pay the rent" and you can't argue with that.

Seating remains the same, running almost full circle, accommodating 3000-all stringers, no reserves, any seat a good one. Back door curtains, attached to the mounted bandstand, are red, white and blue, trimmed with stars. The band is strong and Charles Schlarbaum has set lively "up" tunes for the bulk of the program. Handling the band is drummer Joe Eddy, backed up by Rick Percy, trumpet; Fred Kitchen, cordovox; and Rick Percy, sax. They play a concert before the show begins.

Show kicks off with a Bicentennial spec, well costumed, with red, white and blue blankets on the three large lead bulls, is followed by a new cage act worked energetically by 18 year old Michael Cecere which includes 6 young lions and features a roll over and fire-jump cat.

Joemann Henry again enlivens the program with her excellent Roman Riding, entering this year astride three horses - a flashy act, effective on the circular hippodrome track galloping at top speed.

A new feature, the Cortez High Wire Family, opens with standard routines, moves on to a pyramid closer with the girl on a chair carried across by two male partners. At one point the girl, Jenny, is the understander, (unusual of itself) the front half of a carrying team supporting a male member who does a roll-over on a shoulder bar. A fourth Cortez, Werner, attempts some weak comedy, further diluted by "fluttery" movements the act would be better off without - especially in that most of the troupe returns as the Flying Columbians and the same lad does comedy a second time - to stronger results.

Also new are Bradd and Sheila Frank who present two dressage horses on the track and in the ring and close with a third horse doing a lavade, capriole, and

PEOPLE

JIM NORDMARK, of the Int'l All Star Circus, was visiting friends in California last week.

CLOWN COLLEGE (Continued)

graduate, including videotape playbacks, with presentation of diplomas to the students.

The next set of courses will start the second week in June. Interested parties should contact: Midwest Clown College, 12100 So. 80th Ave., Box 323, Palos Park, Illinois. Phone: (312) RE5-8170.

hind leg walk. They reappear with rope-spinning and whip-cracking, well done. Returning are the Diaz Sisters, four comely girls in two acts, bikes and juggling, one of whom solos as Miss Graciella, centering the web display on a single trap.

Jim Silverlake presents the Hoxie bulls with style—five babies including an African, and three adults, and Linda Chandler handles the mounts. The eight bulls rushing pell-mell around the track are impressive in the opening and, again, in the final long mount.

Flying Columbians round out the show with the girl displaying considerable flying skill in a single layout, a double, and a half-twister. She has style and form and executes sharp "returns". Here, the comedy flair of Werner Cortez pays dividends with a clever backwards hocks-off, followed by a sort of sitting half-twister combined with other antics that evoke good laughs. Finish is the passing leap, a "feets across" with a forward over.

Hoxie's side show, managed by Roger Boyd, Jr., featured Princess Margaret Anne, 38 inches tall; and the Baron, fire, swords; also magic, blade box and electric girl, plus zoo.

Hoxie's "main attraction" is the Gorilla. On the Great American it is Kongo; here it is Mongo, housed in the original Gargantua cage wagon last toured in 1939. Both gorillas on both units get the red carpet treatment, the lion's share of publicity. The gorillas are on a 3 year lease - Kongo from Ringling, the biggest of the two; and Mongo from Bob Knoell.

Big show manager John Hall told CR that business has been brisk especially in West Virginia and Ohio and the show is making its first foray into Illinois. Ron Bacon is the contracting agent for this territory.

The rolling stock continues to wear its distinctive lavender color, whether by whimsey or design or because, like a purple cow, it is damn hard to lose a purple truck; and the lots are left as clean upon departure as they are upon arrival—a principal factor in Hoxie being welcomed back to the same towns each year.

The Circus:

It was "cherry pie" time—circus lingo for an emergency. The trucks carrying the big tent had broken down, and by the time they rolled into downtown Burbank, only five hours remained before show time. Members of all 22 acts ran to help out: clowns, barkers, aerialists, animal trainers, tightrope walkers, acrobats, and Colonel Wallace Ross and his elephants ("ninety-thousand pounds of pachyderms").

Tired Tiger. For three hours, the bizarrely assorted crew sweated and struggled to raise the 17,508 sq ft of brilliant orange canvas in time for the evening's performance. All the while, a small, bearded figure zipped frantically through the melee, hauling on ropes, testing wires and worrying about the wind—and about the chance that a bull elephant might turn catastrophically amorous. When the tent was finally up, Impresario Clifford Vargas glanced aloft and declared with satisfaction: "We are the biggest big top in America."

Circus Vargas' big tent, glowing in the night like an amber mountain, is a cheerful atavism, a reminder of a time when Americans huddled happily on benches under canvas, eating cotton candy and peanuts and staring at the marvels occurring in the three rings before them. Now the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus ("the greatest show on earth") plays only indoor arenas, driven to cover by the extraordinary expense of raising the big top and creating its own city wherever it goes. Only 18 American circuses are still under canvas, and most are little more than carnivals with a tired tiger or two, barnstorming in a few battered trucks.

Three other shows are in the same class as Circus Vargas: Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros., Carson-Barnes, and Hoxie Bros. According to Fred D. Pfening Jr., former president of the Circus Historical Society, Vargas is a traditional circus of outstanding quality, and the "unique thing about it is its perpetual migration across the country."

A circus that did not migrate would not be much of a show to Vargas—he crosses the country four times annually, visiting 100 cities and logging 35,000 miles a year. To Vargas, a circus that had no tent would be no circus at all. He spurns the indoor variety as "air-conditioned and sterile. The animals' smell is clouded with disinfectant, and there isn't even sawdust. It's like watching a movie."

From the moment he saw his first big top as a boy, Vargas' obsession was to have one of his own. After marking time as a Fuller Brush salesman and working for the Chicago zoo, in 1972 he bought a small circus that had no tent—a failing he corrected a year later. Says he: "I was starting from virtually nothing, but I knew what I wanted to do."

Doing it seems to require the logistical genius of a Hannibal, the showmanship of a Hurok and the business acumen of a Howard Hughes. A traveling circus has to put up with the whims of the weather, moody animals, occasionally avaricious police and fire departments and frequently finicky bureaucrats who require a sheaf of licenses, clearances and permits.

"There were times when I actually came close to despair," says Vargas, who refuses to give his age because he feels it would bring bad luck. "The worst was in 1974, just outside of New Orleans. It rained for five days and we were float-

ing in an ocean of mud. The high winds collapsed the tent, and it took three days for the elephants to pull out the stakes. Three elephants escaped into a swamp, and most of the trucks broke down. We faced the prospect of being beached forever. I hocked my diamond ring and got enough to get us rolling again. We got back to San Jose and the show clicked. We were on our way up at last."

Now Vargas has 33 trucks, a staff of 160, nine elephants, eight Andalusian horses, a net worth of over \$1 million and a debt of about \$150,000 that he is steadily reducing by packing in 5,000 people a night, usually in shopping centers. What the customers get for the price of admission (\$4.75 for adults, \$2.75 for children), is a fast-paced, two-hour show that features some of the best acts in the business.

When the show began, the Great Vashek did dizzying spins on a high wire near the tent's apex. Doris Naughtin smoothly handled the family's motorcycling bears—one of whom had broken her husband's leg just three days before. Pat Anthony turned his eight lions and four tigers into tabbies. The aerial artists performed miracles with no safety net below. When 45 tons of elephants came thundering through the sawdust for the grand finale, the kids could almost reach out and touch their quivering flanks.

"Goodbye, girls and boys, goodbye until next year," called out Ringmaster Vargas, resplendent in red tails, white riding breeches, gold-flowered waistcoat and black top hat with a gold band. He looked at the dazed delight on the faces of the children who were walking out. "For a moment," he said, "they have lived in a magic world. I wouldn't sell all this for \$10 million."

ROUTES

Ringling-Barnum - Red Unit

May 25-30 Troy, N. Y.

Royal Bros. Circus

May 24 Baron, Alta.

25 Coaldale

26 Magrathe

27 Cardston

28 Claresholm

29 Okotoks

30 Cochrane

Royal Wild West Circus

May 25 Jackson, N.J.

26 Howell

27 Brickton

28 Farmingdale

29 W. Long Brach, N.J.

Sells & Gray Circus

May 24 Gate City, Va.

25 Rural Retreat

26 Blacksburg

27 Covington

28 Cedar Grove, W. Va.

29 Eleanor

30 Point Pleasant

Shrine Circus

May 24-26 Morristown, N.J.

27-30 West Orange, N.J.

John Strong Circus

May 25-26 Albuquerque, N.M.

27 Santa Rosa

28 Portolos

30 Big Springs, Texas

.... OTHER ROUTES

American Freedom Train

May 29-Jun 1 Birmingham, Ala

Century 21 Shows - Blue Unit

May 24-31 Joliet, Ill.

Century 21 Shows - Red Unit

to June 5 St. Louis, Mo.

James H. Drew Shows

May 24-29 Oak Hill, W. Va.

Magic Capades

May 24 Tiwn Falls, Idaho

26 Caldwell

Prof. Miller & Co. (Magic)

May 25 Peterborough, Ont.

26 Kingston

27 Brockville

Rose City Rides

May 25-29 Bonne Terre, Mo.

Tip Top Shows

May 28-31 Fond du Lac, Wisc.