



5th Year

January 26, 1976

Number 4

Mercy Plea Grows

Letters and telegrams have been pouring into Florence (Italy) pleading for mercy for a local circus elephant. In the past six months "Mowgli" has trampled and killed two men and her owners are making plans to execute her.

The 16 year old elephant has been with the Italian circus for ten years and was considered one of their best. "She must be ill now," says show owner Moira Orfei.

The elephant killed her

first victim, an Italian animal man, last July. Early this month she picked up her new Egyptian attendant, hurled him to the ground and trampled him.

Last week a Roma newspaper called for help from local authorities and animal lovers to provide financial means whereby the animal could be sent back to India for a free life in the wild.

The paper said: "Mowgli's fault was that she loved freedom

(Continued on Page 4)

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PEOPLE

LOTTIE BRUNN phoned in to tell us that the shelved Howard Cosell show with MICHAEL CHER-RICK was re-scheduled and shown on Jan. 10th.

HARRY ROSS (Rossey, the Clown) will tour with Henry Bros. for the 1976 season.

DAVE TWOMEY and son MIKE recently visited the offices of Circus Report enroute to dates in Southern California.

THE RONRITAS have their Wheel of Destiny act working at Circus Circus in Las Vegas.

TOMMY HANNEFORD's Riding Act, PRINCE NAJVEZ, MARIO's MAD HATTERS and THE YOUNG TROUPE as well as TAJANA were recently on the Mike Douglas TV Show.

HARRY LILBURN has a circus display that he exhibits each Holiday season in Southern California.

SANDY DOBRITCH has left Lion Country Safari to open his own booking agency in Nevada and California.

THE CIRCUS REPORT is published each Monday by Don Marcks, 525 Oak St., El Cerrito, Cal. 94530.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE: \$12.00 for a year; \$6.00 for six months.

ADVERTISING RATES: Minimum ad is \$2.50; Quarter Page \$5.00; Half Page \$10.00; Full Page \$20.00

In Memoriam

REV. CORNELIUS DOUGHERTY (47) died at Tampa, Fla., on Dec. 3rd, after a long bout with cancer. He was a prominent circus fan and friend of show folks everywhere. Survivors include his mother, Mary Dougherty.

PANSY ERICKSON (85) died at Ketchikan, Alaska, on Jan. 1, after a fall. She was an aerialist with Ringling-Barnum, Lamont Bros. and other shows. At one time her father had his own circus. She performed as part of the Smiletta Family Troupe. Survivors include two daughters and a son.

BONNIE & CLYDE's comedy musical act played the Quality Inn Surfside at Jacksonville Beach (Fla) in Dec. and Jan. Upcoming dates include Naples (Fla) next month and the Lehigh Acres Country Club Resort in March. Act then joins Sells & Gray Circus for 1976, where BILLY EARL returns after five years as Equestrian Director-Ringmaster, he will also present his Zoro Sword Balancing act.

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LEWIS BROS.



The Lewis Bros. Circus, owned and operated by John Lewis, will open its 1976 tour at Jasper, Tenn., on April 23rd. The show will be out on the road until late October, Lewis reports.

The circus will carry a 60 ft with one 40 ft middle big top and use red and white side-walls. Seating will accommodate about 1200 people.

The side show (30x60 ft) will house all the show's animals plus a new 26 ft cage wagon. This wagon and a stock semi will be used as the bannerline. The midway will also feature a snake show with two 12x12 ft banners and a 20 ft. concession and novelty stand.

The show's staff includes:

John Lewis - owner/Gen. Manager
 John Marshall - Mgr/Supt.
 Joe Bray - Assistant Supt.
 Donnie Cannon - Concession mgr
 John Cousins - billposter/press
 Matt Morris - electric/mechanic
 Jay West - big top supt
 Dale Petros - animal supt.
 Joe Gazzermero - side show supt

Admission to the big show will be \$1.00 for children and \$1.50 for adults in advance. The gate prices will be \$1.50 for

children and \$2.00 for adults.

Acts signed for the tour this year include:

The Mentlers - clowns, Human Gorilla, trapeze, balancing
 Eddie Hendricks - dogs
 Lee Spain - bulls, bears, ponies
 Gazelda Cannon - wire, web, juggle
 Miss Tresa - ladder, iron jaw
 Bob Emrico - producing clown
 King Charles Weathersby - band

Show trucks include: Animal truck, poles and seats, light plant, cookhouse, stake driver, water truck, canvas truck, snake show, bus, sleeper, concessions, sound truck, office, etc.

Animals include: (show owned) African lion, puma, three chimps, Barbary ape, stump-tail macquacke, Rhesus monkeys, Ant-eater, two Sicilian donkeys, two llamas, buffalo, yak, Australian Cooamunga, two elephant plus a camel, ponies and mules.

PEOPLE

FRANK KORA, former RBBB veteran, is train side concession manager with the American Freedom Train. PAUL HUDSON, another circus man with the train has been off ill, but expects to join the train again next week.

KARL WALLEDA was pictured walking across the San Diego (Calif.) Stadium in the Jan. 20 issue of the Nat'l Enquirer.

Ready For '76 Season

An opening date is expected to be announced soon for both of the Hoxie circuses coming out of Florida. A good season is anticipated as the shows move through the East, South and Mid-western states.

Hoxie Bros. will continue to use the same 140 ft round top they did last season. It offers a one ring format, which was popular everywhere. Among the acts signed for the upcoming tour are: The Diaz Sisters, Albert Zoppe, Gary Henry, Zoeanna, and Phil Chandler.

The side show will again be managed by Roger Boyd, Jr., and in addition to featuring Princess Margaret and The Baron it will include a gorilla. Other acts are still to be announced.

Hoxie's Great American Circus will use a red, white and blue top (80x160) made by the Leaf Co. A three ring performance will be offered, with seats for about 1800 people. The Bily Gunga Family will be featured in the program and Charles Moyer will be band leader.

All of the show's trucks will carry the Bi-centennial theme in red, white and blue. A recently acquired truck will probably be the only hydraulic canvas spool wagon on the road.

The Spring 1976 issue of "Good Old Days" magazine has a picture story called "Circus Days in Iowa."

Don't forget

TV's "Streets of San Francisco" as filmed at the PAL Circus in November, will be shown on Thursday evening, Jan. 29th



MERCY PLEA (Continued)

more than men are willing to allow for in an animal. Entertaining adults and children was torture to her. She is no killer. She was trying to remove the human obstacles between her and freedom."

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BILLY BARTON.....



The anonymous listing of circus artists in TV Guide and in other sources, as pole climbers, animal demonstrators, etc., is outrageous; a slap in the face to dedicated and accomplished performers. These artists

are not household names it is true, but neither are the majority of the guests who are listed. And, if they are not "stars" in the context of the Big Names who are on, the fact remains they are Stars and should be recognized as such. It is time steps are taken to rectify this shabby treatment.

The HIT of Ringling Blue is BOTTCHEr's BEARS, being touted as probably the BEST animal presentation of the new season. The ARMOR's homecoming from Spain was marred by the tragic death of their son, Jay. The story making the rounds that KAY FRANCIS HANNEFORD has cancer of the throat is, unfortunately, true. MARAN BURCH underwent this ordeal a number of years back and pulled through it fine, so - take heart, Kay.

Pretty PENNY PRICE, talent co-ordinator for the MIKE DOUGLAS show vetoed a "DO" segment (where they DO things) involving a mouse in a glass for fear of offending guest DORIS DAY who is an avid animal crusader. "We love animals, too!" ponders pretty Penny pensively, a gal incidentally who loves her work and, like so many of us, thrives on the chaos of her profession.

And...musical-comedy performer GRETCHEN WYLER is engaged in deadly combat with New York City's SPCA over THEIR treatment of animals - with proper cause.

The Baltimore News American carried a full page story on HINTON HARRISON, a native of that city, when he graduated from the Ringling Clown College. Apprentice clowns, the article stated, are charged no tuition but MUST pay their own travel and living expenses. The course runs two months, headed by BILL BALLENTINE who selects a class of 50 from some 3000 applicants.

GUNNAR AMANDIS opened a talent agency in Sarasota. I am told that KRAMIEN has one of the best magic shows cashing in on the Craze that is sweeping the country - thanks to DOUG HENNING The site eyed for that proposed circus musical on Broadway in '77 is the Wintergarden.

Attention CHERIE TROY, PATSY JORDAN and all those soap opera nuts out there in Spangleland: Hurry and catch that raw new soap-opera MARY HARTMAN, MARY HARTMAN before it's taken off

(Continued on Page 14)

SAWDUST TRAIL

A drastic change has been made in RBBB's Blue Unit route. Hollywood (Fla) has been dropped (the building isn't ready) and now they'll open a day early at Jacksonville.

A Florida-based show will not get off the ground this year. The problem is money and reports are their agent was left holding the bag.

Monroe (La) will get RBBB Red Unit on June 26-27, although final contracts haven't been set.

The real story on the King title is simple when the facts are known. It seems Floyd King transferred the title to his wife several years ago and she leased it to the McCloskey organization, where the contract is still valid. The dates set for the new Cristiani outfit have reportedly been sold to Hoxie Bros.

CFA'r Earl Allen (Sikeston, Mo.) has been ill since Dec. 18 and spent some time in the hospital. An investigation by this reporter shows that an agent was not the "heavy" as reported by one show, but rather that the show has left numerous unpaid bills everywhere.

Holiday Hippodrome is set for Monroe (La) next month and Showtime Follies comes in June.

.... M. L. Dupont

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PEOPLE

STEVE HAWKES, former film Tarzan, keeps two lions and four tigers as pets at his home in Loxahatchee, Fla.

May Wirth Remembers ...by ERIC WILSON

Her favorite horses steadily moved around circus rings in hundreds of towns in every state and foreign countries and petit May Wirth danced and somersaulted on their broad rosined backs.

That was between 1912 and 1928 on Barnum & Bailey and Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey, where the Australian girl of five feet and 110 pounds was a center ring performer. Pink bow in her hair, she captivated crowds everywhere.

They called her the world's best woman rider for she did tricks which were never duplicated - before or since. And even after all these years, her reputation for skill and daring still stands.

May retired as a performer at the age of 52 years. Now she lives in Sarasota, Fla., where she is enshrined in the Circus Hall of Fame.

She started learning her act at the age of six years and was a star performer as a teenager. Her tumbling skill was inherited from her father and her teachers developed her ability.

"Practice is the way to success. I loved to practice, to perfect old tricks and invent new ones. I think my horses got tired before I did," May said.

She says it takes a long time to train a horse properly. The shock of the rider's jumps is hard on their kidneys and they must become accustomed to the feet pounding down on them - even the feet of a 110 lb. girl.

The Wirth family lived in half a rail car and had a dressing top of its own. Everything was first class for such a prominent family.

"Joe, my best horse, worked with me eleven years and died at the age of 17. He was just like a family member. We loved him and I think he loved us," she said.

As the RBBB trains toured the nation, they went to towns of all sizes. The 8,000 capacity big top was full much of the time. Those were the days before TV and other distractions so people came from miles around, drawn by the litho saturation work of the billing crews.

May recalls a little Texas town where the crowd was mostly cowboys and Indians. The cowboys tied their horses to tent ropes and the Indians moved in with their teepees.

"The western riders really appreciated our act for we did things with horses they never imagined," said May.

(Continued on Page 12)

Many Shows Due

. . . . by DON SANDMAN

Looks almost as if a "circus war" is developing here in Ohio with several shows all scheduled in close together. The Soviet Circus played Cincinnati on Jan. 14-19 and Ringling-Barnum had big ads in the local papers during that time advertising their upcoming March 24-28 engagement in the same building.

The Syrian Shrine Circus will play Cincinnati on March 16-21 while the Dayton Shrine Circus, just 50 miles away, is set for March 24-28. The real battle will be between the Syrian Shrine Circus and Ringling-Barnum - just three days apart.

ROUTES

Benefit Circus

Jan. 26-31 Grand Rapids, Mich

Caltech Circus

Jan 31-Feb 1 Pasadena, Cal.

Circus Vargas

Jan 29-Feb 2 Hayward, Calif.

Cole All Star TV Circus

Jan 26 Ashland, Pa.

28 Bellefonte

29 Jersey Shore

31 Phillipsburg

Tommy Hanneford Circus

Jan 28-Feb 15 Detroit, Mich.

Happytime Circus

Jan 27-Feb 1 Hoitville, Cal.

Int'l All Star Circus

Jan 29 Statesboro, Ga.

Polack Bros. Circus

Jan 30-Feb 1 Roanoke, Va.

Soviet Circus

Jan 28-Feb 1 Binghampton, NY

Stebbing Royal European Circus

Jan 23-Feb 1 W.Palm Bch, Fla

The Soviet Circus played here in the 17,000 seat Riverfront Coliseum. However, the big arena was divided in half by a huge curtain hanging across the center and thereby cutting the seating to 8500. The show was interesting, but tended to be a bit boring and overlong.

Local papers praised the performance and attendance was about 5,000 per show. Members of the John Robinson CFA Tent went to the circus as a group and the building even advertised this fact on their flashing sign board.

Of special interest to the circus fan was the fact one could see behind the dividing curtain. Thus it was possible to watch the performance, along with an opportunity to see backstage and watch performers warming up, resting and caring for the various animals.



YEARS AGO

Sells Floto Circus

Pittsfield, Mass. June 8, 1924

Featured in the side show are: Negro band; Cuban Mack, sword swallower and knife thrower; Hawaiian Troupe (5); Prof. Tryon, magic and Punch; Princess Elizabeth, albino; Paul Harold, giant; small pony; Miss Carmelite, long hair; Little Francis O'Connor, armless girl; George Nelson, tattooed man; Lady Cleo, snakes; Madame Zaza, mind reader and a Scotch bagpiper.

In the menagerie were: 14 elephants, 6 camels, 1 llama, 15 cages, cage of monkeys, hippo and two candy stands.

The program was very good, with some nice animal acts. During the Wild West announcement one of the riders fell, but was not hurt. The Wild West after show was given before a big crowd. They have 15 riders, 12 cowboys, 2 cowgirls and a comedy rider.

The cookhouse and horse tents were ready to go about 6 p.m. and the menagerie was all loaded by 9:30 p.m.

The side show was still going when the big show was over, but was down and packed by the time the big top was down.

Everything was off the lot by 11:30 p.m. and the train was loaded and pulling out of town at 1 a.m.

TV Special

A number of interesting circus acts were seen performing at the Int'l Monte Carlo Circus Festival, which was televised last week.

Acts appearing in the TV Show were:

The Charles Troupe - teeterb'd
Niccolini's chimps
Isabella Nock - single trapeze
The Flying Souza Troupe
Charles Wiser - elephants
Little John - hand balancer
Mecner Trio - vaulting act
Gene Mendez - high wire
Alexis Bruce - liberty horses

There was also a Mexican perch act, a lion act with 10 animals and a 16 cat tiger act.

ROUTES

American Freedom Train

Jan. 30 Tucson, Ariz.

Black Watch Troupe

Jan. 26 New Haven, Conn.

27 Hartford

28 Augusta, Me.

30-Feb 1 Boston, Mass.

Globetrotters

Jan. 30 El Paso, Texas

Mad World of Magic

Jan. 27 Wilcox, Ariz.

31 Deming, N.M.

Magic Capades

Jan. 27 Artesia, N.M.

29 Las Cruces

SPRIT OF '76

....by BILLY BARTON

The Circus has been a downtrodden show-business "minority" for too long -- the poor relation of the arts living on the wrong side of the tracks. The time has come to liberate an Image for which we must hold ourselves directly responsible. It is easier to grouse about Public Opinion than it is to remedy the situation.

Irreverant public behavior, rudeness, dirtiness, sloppiness, rip-offs, rag-bag operations, hit and run promotions, fly-by-night producers and inferior performances all contribute to the decline of an otherwise honorable Estate and leads to unfavorable Press.

The urgency to upgrade all facets of the industry is essential as well as the need to eliminate the unscrupulous whose unorthodox activity leaves barren territory and angry citizenry behind for others to face.

The obligation to espouse that which is Good, to be ever-vigilant against that which is Bad, falls to each and every one of us. How successful we are in curing the ills of our profession depends upon our willingness to face up to the truth and then act with determination to eradicate the malignity.

Miscellaneous

Western Frontier magazine for March 1976 has a story and pictures about "The Day Denver Buried Buffalo Bill."

people

AL WEIR, retired clown, and his wife EILEEN, spent the holidays in a hospital. Al suffered a heart attack and Eileen underwent a hip operation.

THE AMAZING MONAHANS were somehow deleted from the list of acts working the Belle Vue Circus, reported last week.

Hotel Acts

Acts appearing at the MGM Hotel in Las Vegas (Nev.) during my recent visit included:
Jenda Smaha and elephant
Gran Picaso - juggler
Siegfried & Roy - illusions

.... Jim Swafford

FOR SALE

A copy of The Billboard dated April 9, 1949. Has a full color cover picture of a Royal American Carnival wagon.

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MAY WIRTH (Continued)

Brooklyn seemed to be a bad luck city. Her horse shied and May's foot caught in the stirrup. The horse circled the ring three times as May's head banged the ring curb. Finally the horse went onto the track and May's mother stopped the animal and extracted the semi-conscious girl.

Of the Ringling brothers, Mr. Charlie (always called that) was a favorite. Friendly and talkative, he took an interest in everyone. Brother John was a colder person, often formidable. He was quick to criticize.

May has many fond memories of the old days. She says the shows of her era were best.

"Now there is too much glamour and night club sparkle. Too many 'tournaments' (now called specs). But most of the acts are excellent. This year I saw some European men do tricks like mine but no women tried them," May declared.

In Madison Square Garden where the show has opened for many years, there are photo galleries of great performers, sports athletes and circus stars.

"My picture is there. But it is with the athletes' photos, not with the circus people. I don't know whether to be flattered or annoyed. After all, I was all circus even though some of my feats were athletic," said May.





TAKE IT UP!
GOMGOPITO!
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HELPING PUT UP
THE BIG TOP

S. GERSH

BILLY BARTON (Continued)

the air. It can't last!

What famed actress-singer (who made a circus musical film) chagrinned an equally famous talk-show hostess when she came on to plug her new book and then couldn't remember what it was all about! Speaking of books ... it's a toss between LYLE STEWART PRESS and DELACOURT publishers for the MISTER SENSATION biog by KATHY GOFORTH. If this column is upsetting to some...WAIT!...And reports filter in that people are having difficulty obtaining the KARL WALLENDIA book. Any answers?

Dame KATE HANNEFORD is not exactly thrilled about her age being announced on the MIKE DOUGLAS show as 89 when she is a mere 87! Even a day means a lot when one passes 19! DAVE DEQUE, formerly with G-M Circus, is now romping with Royal Hanneford. WHITEY CARLSON and son, Steve, of the Onstage Disco in Long Island, plan a circus there in April '77. What an ideal set-up for a compact, inexpensive European styled show. Award-winning actress GREER GARSON (WHY doesn't she DO more!) is a real circus buff, and now resides near Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Acts appearing in Mentor, Ohio, for Hubler (Jan. 23-25) include JOE ZOPPE TROUPE, PHAROAH'S, DIANO'S ELEPHANTS, LILIANA'S LEOPARDS, FLYING VALENTINES

PRINCE NAJVEZ, DAVID ZOPPE FAMILY and PAUL KOHLER. Clown Alley consisted of Tom Sink, The Freddie Trio and Grotto Clowns. Florine Oler handled the music and, as always, with expertise.

The Shot Heard Round The World: IRVIN FELD, RB Prexy, held a heated telephone conversation with TREVOR BALE in the wee hours of the ayem as to whether or not ANNIE OAKLEY should fire her gun in Spec. Will she? Won't she? She Will! She won't! See the show and find out - but PLEASE don't reveal the ending!

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NOTE.....

The above advertisement of the Orpheum Theatre at Los Angeles, Calif., appeared in newspapers on March 5, 1917.

