

BACK YARD

Volume V, Issue #86

February 29, 2000

Flying Wards Off Today For The Season Kept In Training Here This Winter (Bloomington IL Pantagraph April 19, 1916)

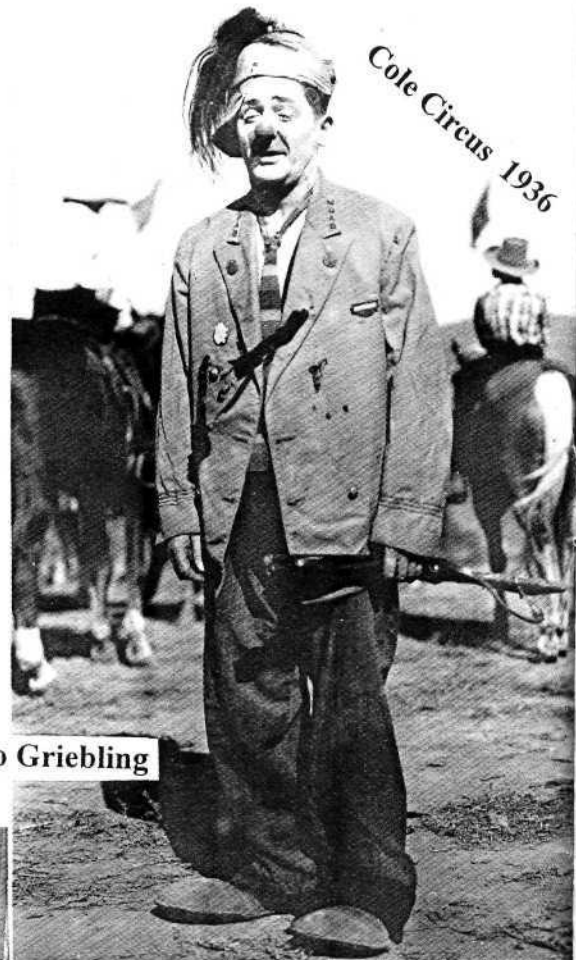
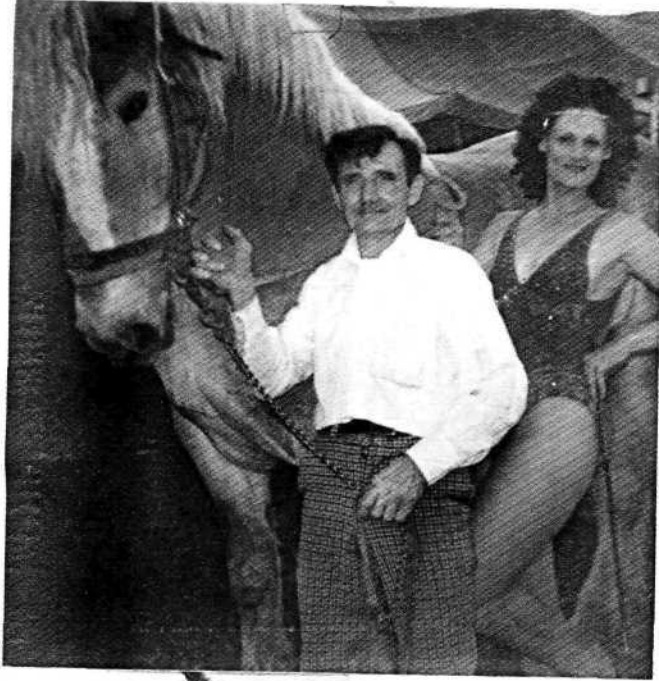
The Flying Wards, Bloomington's most famous troupe of circus acrobats, will leave this morning on the Big Four road to embark in the season of 1916 under the canvas tents. Their first destination is Mitchell, Ind. where the Hagenbeck-Wallace shows will open the season next week. They then proceed to Cincinnati for several days. People who have driven or ridden out on East Emerson St. during the past year have noticed on the south side of the road about a quarter of a mile east of the Illinois Central subway, a large and high-roofed wooden building, which looks something like a barn, but which is a queer looking barn, at that. It is 20' wide, 40' long and 37 feet high.

This building is the gymnasium built by Eddie Ward and his fellow acrobats on the little farm which they bought at the eastern edge of the city. The place consists of 10 acres and here Elvie Ward will live and raise fruit and chickens and things while the other members of the family are traveling around the country risking their necks every day of the year in one of the most daring trapeze acts in the circus of today.

The members of the troupe are Eddie Ward and his wife, Mayme; Alex Todd and his wife, Jennie Ward; Ernie Lane and Billy Summers. They all live together in the big frame house which is the residence on the Ward "farm." All winter long they have been hard at work every day in the big wooden gym which they built on the rear of the house lot and they consequently start on the road for their professional engagement in the pink of condition, physically and ready to give the first audiences which visit the show the same thrills and exhibition of daring trapeze work that the crowds of summer will see. An interesting sight is a view of the interior of the gym where the famous troupe of performers have been at work. The wooden work of the building is in a rough state, no plastering or interior



finishing being necessary. (Continued on Page 4)



Cole Circus 1936

Otto Griebing



Ray Dirgo & Father Ralph Pollone



Photo By Shirley Finger

THE CHIMP CHANNEL By Mike Cecere

One of the most interesting experiences with intelligent wildlife I have had over the years is with the great apes. I have presented well trained chimpanzees, trained chimpanzees, cared for a gorilla, orangutan and a multitude of apes of all kinds.

But the wildest adventures came while working as chief Wild Animal Trainer at a large Safari park. By virtue of being chief trainer, I ended up suddenly one afternoon having to work an act with 3 adult chimps, who were all about the size of King Kong when perturbed, which as they aged, seemed a daily affair.

I had backed up the former presenter who had constantly been outwitted by the apes, culminating with them locking him out of the ape house for half a day and having the best time trashing the place! Finally, they surrendered to the park's "Hostage Rescue Team," consisting of myself, the owner's son and a truckload of bananas. Neither of us had any trouble with them, but they would torment any employee they could outsmart, which was funny at times.

They had a huge outdoor public exhibition yard which used to be a scene of pitched battles between apes and humans as the chimps would hurl all kinds of projectiles at the visitors. Plus, they had learned from less well-mannered visitors how to spit, which was double annoying. Then they discovered they could do this to the less experienced keepers, which made the chimp exhibition area a virtual DMZ.

Only a couple of us dared to enter the enclosure which sometimes resembled a scene from the movie, "Sparticus." In my last year with the firm, the owners, all animal lovers, thought that perhaps the big chimps would be happier with more of their own kind and gave me the freedom to find them new homes. There was not the system of sanctuaries as there is now and it took a lot of searching.

Finally I found them a wonderful place run by a couple who had performed with chimps and retired in Florida with their animals and ended up taking in all kinds of great apes, even gorillas! Well, they did a great job, but didn't have a lot of money, so I paid them and for all the expenses out of my own pocket to come for two of the chimps. And it coincided with a cable news story of their lives, so the film company also gave them some banana money and nice press. So, down come the folks and film crew and they had bought each chimp a huge fruit basket as a going away gift. I had thought about giving them

each a watch, but what would they do with a watch without a show to prepare for? The Sanctuary had brought two crates with them and while calmly leading the chimps in them, the husband told the camera crew that he had lost two fingers years before doing the same thing! (A real cheerful thought!) But all went well and I have a great video of it in my collection of that memorable day.

I continued to use the larger male chimp (while searching for his new home) until one day when I cued him to ride his bicycle, he walked over, picked it up, bent it in half and handed it to me. So, that was his swan song from showbiz and he was soon off to his new home.

Several years later, I saw the big guy on NBC's "Saturday Night Live" in a skit called, "I Married A Chimp." In recent years, after watching countless documentaries with Jane Goodall, I marvel we weren't all overpowered and eaten by the great apes. Life was never dull on the Chimp Channel!!

.....
Circus Model Builders 2000 Gathering will be June 23-25 at the Boise Center on the Grove in Boise, Idaho. Set up will be June 21 and Clinics June 22. The Gathering Motel is the Best Western-Safari (1-800-541-6556-CMB Code #83702). It is sponsored by Lot 9 and for more information, contact Registrar: Robert Maahs, 678 Gore Rd, Kalama, WA 98625-9710.
.....

News From Our Circus Friends

***Peggy Williams writes** Father Jerry Hogan is featured in the March issue of Life magazine, with photos of him at both Ringling Red and Big Apple Circus. President's Day, Feb. 21, Ringling Red unit sponsored a major street parade in downtown Atlanta, through Olympic Park. It was complete with the entire cast, 8 antique wagons from Baraboo pulled by beautiful draft horses, a calliope played by Dave Morecraft and an 8-camel hitch pulling one of the wagons. Police estimated that about 25,000 people lined the streets of the one mile parade route. This was the first Ringling Street Parade in Atlanta in 80 years. (Imagine this..probably everyone that saw this parade has never seen a circus parade before!) Another parade highlight was a full brass band riding atop the John Robinson bandwagon, under the baton of none-other than Mr. Charles Schlarbaum! And a rolling concert by the Ringling Bell Wagon. Local groups included the Cloggers & the Dacula Marching Band-30 units were in the parade.

Flying Wards Off For Season.....

At one end is a work bench, where a complete kit of tools of all kinds is kept for the ordinary carpentering and blacksmithing work that is usual around a small farm. But hung high to the sloping timbers of the roof are a number of swinging trapezes and at one end the platform on which the actors stand between their daring leaps and flying vaults thru the air. This work is put up in the most substantial manner, for with the terrific momentum with which the actors project themselves into the air and catch the swinging trapeze, it would wreck anything but the most substantial structure. Below the maze of ropes and bars high in the air is stretched the big net, which is the center of the "safety first" measures with which the gymnasium is provided. This net is made by hand by the Wards themselves, hence they are sure of its material and construction and they have no fears in entrusting their lives to its care when at any time they make a miscue and fall from the high stations in the air. In fact, all the apparatus with which they work is made by themselves.

To illustrate their ideas of "preparedness," the members of the troupe point to a great mass of ropes, nets and canvas bags in one end of the building. These represent a complete tent outfit with which they will start on the road this week. The one in the building will remain undisturbed while the performers are traveling. In other words, they carry 2 complete outfits. This provides against delays in case of fire, wreck or other accident which might destroy their road outfit. In such case they would wire home for the house equipment, which could reach them at any part of the country in a minimum of time. If such precautions were not taken, they might have to delay their act for many weeks in case of accident.

Nearly every afternoon during the winter and spring, when the performers were practicing their flying acrobatic stunts, numbers of their friends have gathered in the gym to watch and admire them. To these spectators, it is easy to realize that a circus performer's life is not an easy one. When the 6 actors have gone thru their acts a couple of times in an afternoon, they jump down from the net wringing wet with perspiration and apparently very much tired out. Eddie & Mayme do most of the "catching." When one realizes what a strength it takes to simply hold up a full-sized man or woman by the arms, then one can realize how manifold greater strength and art it requires to catch and hold a man or woman shot thru the air with terrifying speed. Nor is it to be taken for granted that the actor always gets to his "catcher" just in

time to make the act a success. A fraction of a minute in time or the fraction of a foot in space above or beyond the calculation of the "catcher" means that the other actor does not get hold of the outstretched arms, but falls kerplunk into the net. "All right," sings out Eddie from his swinging trapeze nearly 40' in the air and Ernie, who has just missed his hold and fallen in a heap in the net, calmly climbs up the rope to the platform again and tries the trick all over again. In time they learn just the exact moment to take the flying leap and get the catch and this scientific precision is what brings the thrills to the circus audiences and this also is the reason which make the pay of stay-at-homes look meager.

For many years, the Flying Wards have been known as among the country's most daring trapeze artists. This year they are putting on a new thriller. This is the triple somersault and catch which would bring any spectator to his feet in admiration when it is successfully accomplished, as it will be in every performance in the tent this summer. The Wards depart today in fine condition and they expect a successful season.

There are many other successful troupes of circus people that call Bloomington home. There are the Flying LaFayettes, who are with Ringling this year. The Enos Troupe will go on the road with the Sells-Floto Circus. Charles Fisher and his company are with the Gollmar Circus. The Green-LaVan Troupe are doing parks and fairs in many parts of the country this summer. The LaMar Troupe are in Vaudeville and the Ernstonians are now in Australia doing the circus routes there. A conservative estimate gives a total of 300 circus actors, managers, advance men and agents who will be on the road this summer who call Bloomington their home.

(In an article from The American Magazine, 1928 by Earl Chapin May, "Grab It!"; -ISU Circus Archives-Eddie Ward speaks about his life and family in the circus.)

"You have some nerry flyers working for you this season," I said to the veteran. Eddie smiled in the wisdom of his 40 years. "It takes more than nerve to make a circus flyer. I've been training boys & girls for the flying-return for over 20 years. I've put a hundred of them in the business in my time. Too much nerve is a dangerous things. What keeps me and my pupils in the circus business is strict attention to discipline. I don't mean the discipline of regular hours, plain food and all of that. Anybody can understand why dissipation doesn't go with circusing. The discipline I'm referring to is the discipline of taking orders from the boss. (See Page 7)

A PAWS FROM MOZART

By Mozart Valentine

MEOW EVERYBODY! My Mom, Cherie, said so many folks wrote and called her that I guess my column will get to be regular. If you like it, let Mom know!

Well, to start, we go to the beautiful Burnet Park Zoo in Syracuse, NY who had the stork visit (a darn big stork!) and drop off a bouncing baby Asian Elephant, named "Preya." Now over a week old, she is the 4th baby to be born at the Zoo since 1991 and the 3rd calf to Mom "Rommani." Proud Pop, "Indy," is one of the top breeding bull Asians in North America.

Chuck Doyle, curator of Mammals, and his team John Moakler, Mickey Case and other dedicated Elephant professionals, keep the program there at the very top. Additionally devoted members of the Friends of the Zoo, such as Carol Spiegel, Betty Overacker and dozens of others, give untold financial aid and countless hours of their time to help keep the Zoo one of the real gems of the community. Lots of great support from the entire community! That's where the "cutting edge" work is being done with Elephants-it is in zoos/parks.

Okay, lots of shows already out or getting ready to go out and fans can't wait till circus day. Remember, let my mom Cherie know what you saw; please share your news, reviews and photos of your visits to shows, indoors or outdoor! Now, to our Fan Friends.

Let's start with our good friend, Jim Harshman, past CFA Prez and close friend to many showpeople. He is still a little under the weather and would love to hear from folks. Jim Harshman, Homewood Retirement Center, 16505 Virginia Ave, Rm 126, Williamsport, MD 21795 or give him a call 301-223-5355.

Also, our friend Charlie DeWein would like to hear from you so write him at: Masonic Health Care, 2655 W. National Rd, Springfield, OH 45504. And please remember Al Conover, who is recuperating from a stroke, at: 927 Oakland Dr., Beavercreek, OH 45434 or give him a call at 937-426-4656. And new to the Mozart List, is the great showman and owner of Famous Cole Indoor Circus, Ron Bacon. He had some leg surgery and is recovering nicely but let's send him a card to cheer him up a little: PO Box 485, Belpre, OH 45714. (Thanks to Don Sandman for letting us know) A note to my Mom from Jane Nida said her husband, Dow Nida, a Past President of the CFA, is in the VA Medical Center, 50 Irving St. NW, Washington, DC 20422, K Wing, Room 152, (202) 528-4470. He is getting excellent care and

attention there. "He has a wonderful attitude-his real FAITH in God. Please continue to pray for him." We will Jane and thanks for letting us know. Please send these fine folks cards, letters, newsclippings, programs, photos and they would also love to hear about your experiences visiting shows. To showpeople! These are fine folks that have been your friends for many years; please don't forget them! Again, to all my friends out there, thanks for your kind words. Let my Mom know what you'd like to see; share your news with others. Hmm..., Wonder what Mom cooked me for dinner? MEOW for now, let's hear from you! Mozart Valentine.

Allan Stopyra sent the Feb. 11 clipping from Syracuse about "Preya." Her name means "sweetheart" or "darling" and she weighed 286 pounds and more than 3' tall at birth.

Amos Bolieau writes: What does a circus fan do on a cold, windy winter's day? Well he could sit and think about days gone by, he could dig out some of his memorabilia and reminisce. No, he goes out and looks for a circus. This is what Mary & I did on Feb. 5 and would you believe it? We did find one. It was the 5th Annual Hilltop Circus, featuring the Hollis Dixie Land Band, which was playing at the Pine Hill Waldorf School Auditorium in Wilton, NH. The show was celebrating the International Community With Arts performed by Pine Hills Mostly Magnificent Middle School Students.

The show consisted of many great acts. The following were some of the acts found on the program: From Spain: The Hula Hoop Falmenco Dancers; From China: The Chinese New Year Lion Dance; From Arabia: Hussan and the Magical Teapot; From Hungary: The Roving Gypsy Club Jugglers; From India: Ancient Club Twirling in Ritual; From Italy: Giant Meatballs Save World; From Scotland: One Wheeled Highland Dancers and 12 foot Pyramid Ladders the International Communities supporting one another. This wonderful show is directed and produced by Jackie Davis who is a founding member of the American Youth Circus Organization. She is to be complimented on the wonderful job she does with these students in putting together this production. At Intermission, soda, t-shirts, fresh air (free) and popcorn at .50 a bag, take my word for it! Anyone interested in learning more about the Hilltop Circus can contact Jackie Davis, POB 688, Abbott Hill Rd, Wilton, NH 03086. (Thanks, Amos-really 50 cents??)

Ringling Bros. And Barnum & Bailey-Red Unit Atlanta Parade-February 21, 2000

By Richard Reynolds III

(Written 2/17/00) The great street parade is shaping up. It will be the first "formal" street parade here for RBBB since October 18, 1920, almost 80 years ago. (We must exclude the animal marches of the 1970s during RBBB's first years of playing the OMNI. They consisted only of the elephants, horses and camels with a few local celebrities riding the elephants. They mostly took place in the mornings, often as soon as the animals were unloaded from the circus train. The route was usually from the OMNI east on Marietta St. to Five-Points and back to the OMNI and amounted to little more than an extended hike from the show train to the OMNI backyard.)

As to circuses besides RBBB, the last "old style" circus parade (meaning horse drawn wagons) in downtown Atlanta was that of Robbins Bros. on October 17, 1938. The next one after Robbins and the last previous one of any sort downtown, was by the Cristiani Bros. Circus on April 20, 1959, under auspices of Atlanta's Yaarab Temple Shrine. Cristiani was a motorized show and there were no horse drawn wagons. The parade began and ended at the old Atlanta Municipal Auditorium at Hurt Park (GA State) where the show played. Parade was a flop because only the elephants and steam calliope got here in time for the morning march.

Other units, such as truck-cages with hippo and rhino did not make it. Steam calliope (mounted in a tractor drawn trailer) did not even have time to heat the water in the boiler. It rolled by in silence except for last few blocks when it turned from Peachtree into Edgewood and there was finally enough steam to make some music. The Shriners were hopping mad-all those families with children lining the downtown streets with little to show for their effort.

Well, there will be no steam calliope here for the Red Unit's march Monday. However, there will be 7 other wonderful horse drawn historic circus wagons from the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, WI, many highly decorated with woodcarvings, to wit:

No. 1-Lion and Gladiator Tableau built for the John Robinson Circus in about 1917; No. 84-Sea Shell Tableau from J.H. Eschman show of the 1910s; No. 37-Lion's Bride from Carl Hagenbeck Circus of 1905-06; No. 66-Barnum, Bailey & Hutchinson Tableau cage wagon, built by Fielding Wagon Co for the Barnum &

London Circus in 1883; "Olde Woman Who Lived in the Shoe" pony float, built for Barnum & London in 1883; Royal Italian Bandwagon to be drawn by a dromedary camel hitch, provided by Dave Hale of Cape Girardeau, MO; Ringling Bros. Bell Wagon built in 1892 and equipped with 9 huge bronze bells cast by Centennial Bell Foundry, Milwaukee.

(This is the latest lineup-changes could be made at the last minute.) All the historic wagons are equipped with colorful steel-tired wooden wheels. All the wagons will be horse drawn, save the one with Hale's camel team.

CWM's wagon superintendent, Harold "Heavy" Burdick, will be in charge of bringing the wagons to Atlanta. Deppe Trucking Co. of Baraboo will haul them. It is closely allied to CWM and usually handles moves likes this. If the wagons are placed in or adjacent to the circus's back yard, they can easily be seen. Because the new Philips Arena took up the former back yard space behind the old OMNI, this year, for the first time, the back yard is set up in the huge parking space that was once the platform and train assembly area for the old Terminal Station. It is right out in the open between and below the Techwood Dr. and M.L. King viaducts, affording a great panorama shot from above. Dave Hale will arrive with his camels February 19.

In addition, RBBB will have all or most of its animals in the march. These include 14 Asian elephants, 38 horses, 4 zebras, plus alpacas, dromedary camels and yaks. I do not know if the RBBB tigers and leopards will be included. Also, most of RBBB-Red's personnel will participate. This should include Gunther Gebel-Williams and his son, Mark Oliver Gebel with the elephants.

The march will also include high school bands. Ex-heavyweight champ Evander Holifield is said to be a special guest star. The move over International Blvd. from Peachtree will be interesting as that will take the parade down a steep hill. (Richard was at the 1959 Cristiani Bros. Circus Parade and took photos, two of which were published in the 1959 Cristiani Route Book. If you have it, look on page 14-there you will see the elephants on Peachtree. On page 47, you will see the steam calliope on Edgewood Ave. (Thanks, Richard.)

CFA Convention: If anyone is DRIVING down to Sarasota from the Midwest, your Editor would like to go with you and help pay the outrageous gas prices! I'm not too keen on flying, but would like to make the Convention. I already have two lovely roommates-Sheelagh Jones & Mary-Jane Foote-now all I have to do, is find a way there! HELP!!!

"GRAB IT!".....

The boss is the chief catcher of the flying-return act. In this case, I happen to be the boss, for I employ the people who fly & catch with me. Although all of us are known as flyers, technically, the flyers are those who do the spectacular work. They fly from the trapeze bar to the catcher's hands and are returned by the catcher to the bar which carries them back to the flyers' perch. So the flyers are the folks who get the applause.

The catchers, hanging by their knees or hocks get little credit from the towners on the circus seats. But if the catcher did not know how to *time* each trick in the routine of our act, most of my flyers would end their days in hospitals. That's why flyers must have nerve; but what they need most is discipline.

Aerialists, as the word suggests, must do their work up in the air. A mistake is followed by a fall. The fall is usually softened by the net, although such a fall can and does sometimes end fatally. But in straight trapeze work, which I began when I was 10, a fall is finished on the ground and it isn't just a fall from a horse or fellow performer's shoulders but a fall from ten to forty feet.

My sister Jennie & I did a trapeze act for 12 years before either of us had a nasty fall. Our star trick was a drop she did from a trapeze above me to a foot-to-foot catch; that is she would drop head downward and her feet would catch in mine as I sat, with legs extended, on a lower trapeze bar. It took close timing to do that act.

We had been doing it for nearly 3 years, when, one day, in hurrying thru our routine before the equestrian director's whistle blew to announce that all acts working in that number were thru-and they must all be thru at the same minute-Jennie slipped from her bar. I let go one hand and reached for her. But she fell too fast for me and her body landed across the wooden ring curb.

The impossible happened in that fall. Her neck broke a two-by-four in that ring curb, but the ring curb didn't break her neck. Why? Partly because luck was with her at the time, but principally because her well-developed neck and shoulder muscles protected her. Most of the physical development gained by aerialists is in the shoulders, chest and arms. Youth and perfect condition helped Jennie live thru that 40' fall. She was only twenty at the time.

After 5 weeks in the hospital, she rejoined the show. For 3 more weeks she couldn't work. Her back was bent into a half circle, but she straightened it. Every day she'd take hold of a side rope leading from a tent stake to a side pole

of the tent and gradually, day by day, pull herself erect. It was punishment of the toughest kind. But she worked with me 8 more years, until she was killed in the circus train wreck at Gary, in 1918-killed outright in the berth next to mine after we had worked together more than twenty years. But Jennie's fall while doing the foot-to-foot catch that no other double trapeze performers could ever do was caused by forgetting discipline. She didn't time her movements accurately.

That's why, since I've been specializing in the flying-return, I make all my pupils listen to me. Each flyer leaves the perch when I tell him or her to grasp the trapeze bar and 'go.' Each flyer leaves the bar when I say, 'Leave it.' Each flyer reaches for the catcher's hands when I say, 'Grab it.' Each catcher-sometimes there are three of us catching all at once, or nearly so-returns the flyer to the bar when I command it.

It's timing that counts in the flying-return. And the head catcher does the timing for all the tricks in our routine. This timing is pretty difficult, because someone of the 3 or 4 flyers should be flying all the time. And if the whole act is not done gracefully and with apparent ease, the act would lose its strongest pull.

When a new pupil reaches my training barn, on my farm near Bloomington, I make sure he has plenty of nerve by sending him up to the flyer's perch, 30' above the ground, then telling him to jump, back downward, into the net. I am careful to explain just why he must land on back or shoulders. If he lands face forward, he may break his neck; if he lands on his feet he may break a leg. I'm not trying to scare newcomers needlessly. I'm just stating the facts and starting them off right.

You might think that the circus flying business is filled with accidents. But bad falls are rare. 'If you do exactly what I tell you and *when* I tell you, nothing serious can happen to you,' is what I keep hammering into my pupils, from the time they begin on ground work and Roman rings. Successful aerialists must, like all performers, begin on the ground.

They must be strong and quick and supple. That combination can be secured only by many days and weeks of back-bends, hand-springs, flipflaps, round-offs and somersaults on the ground. This preliminary course must be completed by long hours of exercise on Roman rings, to give them arm and shoulder development. These tests of their ability to respond to discipline come long before I let them try to fly from bar to catcher in the air."

(To Be Continued)

RINGLING RED: Cincinnati, OH-Firststar Ctr: 3/1-5;
Baltimore-Arena: 3/8-19; Washington, D.C.-MCI Ctr:
3/23-26; Washington DC-DC Armory: 3/28-4/9
.....

RINGLING BLUE: East Rutherford, NJ-Cont'l Arena:
3/1-5; Uniondale, NY-Nassau Coliseum: 3/7-13; NYC-
Madison Sq. Garden: 3/16-4/2; Knoxville-Civic
Coliseum: 4/6-9; Providence-Civic Center: 4/26-30; New
Haven-Coliseum: 5/3-7; Hartford-Civ Ctr: 5/10-14.
.....

BIG APPLE CIRCUS: Atlanta, GA-Lakewood
Fairgrounds: 2/23-3/5; Somerset County, NJ-Patriots
Park: 3/11-26; Boston-Fan Pier: 4/1-5/7; Queens, NY-
Cunningham Park: 5/11-5/21; Brookville, NY-Long
Island Univ.: 5/26-6/4; Chicago-Arlington Intl: 6/10-25
.....

Big Apple OOPS!: Camden, NJ-Sony Ctr: till 3/5;
Amherst, MA-U of Mass: 3/7-8; Portland, ME-Merrill
Audit.: 3/10-12; Schenectady-Proctor's: 3/14-16; West
Point-3/17-18; Stamford, CT-Palace: 3/21/26; Baltimore-
Lyric Opera House: 3/28-4/2; Syracuse-4/4.
.....

Jordan World Circus: Muskegon-Walker Arena: 3/3-5;
Cincinnati-3/9-12 Grand Rapids-DuRex Ctr: 3/15-17
.....

Barnum's Kaleidoscope: Dallas-Valley View Mall-2/5-
3/12; Chicago-Soldier Field: 3/29-4/30.
.....

Royal Hanneford: E. Lansing MI-Breslin Ctr: 3/17-19
.....

Sterling-Reid Circus: Normal, IL-ISU Arena: 3/18;
Springfield, IL: 3/19
.....

Royal American Circus: Dayton-Fairgrounds: 4/4-5
.....

Hanneford Shrine Circus: Columbus, OH-3/24-4/2
.....

Chinese Acrobats: Wilmington, OH-Murphy Theatre: 4/1
.....

Dayton Shrine: Univ. of Dayton Arena: 4/7-9
.....

UniverSoul Circus: Cleveland: 5/24-28; Columbus:
5/31-6/4; Cincinnati: 6/7-11; Indianapolis: 6/12-16
.....

Carson & Barnes Circus: Newark, OH: 8/17; Yellow
Springs: 8/18-19; Englewood: 8/20
.....

Beatty-Cole: DeLand, FL: March 6
.....

Circus World Museum: Opens May 6-Baraboo, WI
.....

Circus Hollywood-Atlanta, GA: 5/5-14-Yaarab Shrine

BACK YARD

is published twice monthly-(15th & 30th) by Cherie Valentine, 1522 Clinton Blvd., Bloomington, IL 61701. Phone: 309-828-0737. FAX (work): 309-438-5378. E-mail: cdvalen@ilstu.edu. Subscription rates are \$30.00 per year, for 24 issues, within the USA. Advertising rates, payable in advance, with your copy, are: Full page \$30; Half page \$15; Quarter Page \$10; 1/8 page \$5. "The Fox," is written by Jenny Wallenda. Other material is written by Cherie Valentine, unless otherwise identified as to author. Comments by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher. Back Yard is a pro-circus, pro-animal publication, which supports the use of animals which are legally held and properly cared for, in the American circus.

Visit www.inficad.com/~circus/backyard.

Passing of our Circus Friends

The Rev. Ralph Pollone, 51, pastor of St. Mary's Church, Pittsfield, MA, died Feb. 9 at Berkshire Medical Center after being stricken with an apparent heart attack at the church.

He was born in North Adams on Nov. 4, 1948, son of Anthony Pollone and Martha Mierzejewski. He was a 1968 graduate of Assumption Prep School in Worcester. He received his bachelor's degree from St. Francis College in Biddeford, Maine in 1972. He attended the Pope John XXIII National Seminary from 1979 to 1983 and was ordained May 14, 1983 at St. Michael's Cathedral in Springfield by the Most Rev. Joseph McGuire. Rev. Pollone was the asst. pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Pittsfield from 1983-1985, Annunciation Church in Northampton 1985-1986, Our Lady of Sacred Heart Church in Springfield 1986-1989, Notre Dame Church in North Adams 1989-1990. He was appointed administrator of North American Martyrs Church in Lanesboro 1990-1992 and was appointed chaplain of Berkshire Medical Center July 1990. He was pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Shelbourne Falls 1992-1995. In 1995, he was appointed pastor of St. Mary The Morning Star Church in Pittsfield & he was also the administrator of St. Francis' Parish, 2 positions he held when he passed away. His closest survivors are aunts, uncles and several cousins.
.....

Derrell Gronso, 83, died 2/1 in Aberdeen, SD. He was an avid motorcycle enthusiast and member #9600 of the Circus Fans Assn. and also a **Duggan-Maley Tent** member. Our condolences to the family and his friends.

The Great Escape By Mike Cecere

Touring with circuses over many years was a great experience. A lot of hard work, but you get to travel, meet people and have some downright funny experiences, even if they didn't seem so funny at the time.

About 15 some odd years ago, I was working for the second largest indoor circus company, next only to the huge Feld organization, based in the Midwest. It was owned and run by some real fine folks who made it a pleasure to be around there and since they were animal lovers, there was no lack of funding for the creatures' comfort. My main job was schooling some animals that I had worked with before, purchased from a large bankrupt tent show and to instruct the new presenters.

The Elephant Supt. was an old friend of mine and before I knew it, I had signed up for the winter tour. Then, since this show had several excellent units, one of which toured the Western U.S., which before then I'd only seen in cowboy movies, I got penciled in for that tour.

And it was great for an East Coast guy like me to be in the wild, wild West. Another eastern "greenhorn" was also on the tour and like the Elephant boss and myself, an Italian! So, that was even more fun. This fellow was a famous Illusionist and Magician and a major league talent, who I had seen many times.

Even in our outdoor venues, he did a top, well received act. Now, we move into a few later big building dates for our friends of the Fez, the Shriners, and into scenic Minot, North Dakota. So, the prop crew pulls out all the indoor gear and sets up the light and sound gear, so high-tech, you thought you were at a Rolling Stones' concert.

And we get out all the rhinestone suits and flashy headpieces, clean white shirts, etc., to give these fine folk a real nice show. Now, our Illusionist friend can bring out some of his extra flashy gear and features best seen in a building. One of which was a spectacular escape from a straight jacket, while suspended by his ankles, high above the arena floor, with the suspension rope set afire. Very spectacular. Strangely enough, I was the only person there who had ever seen that great act in its entirety.

And I had mentioned to the prop boss to be sure he had plenty of fire extinguishers ready for action. he said, "Yeh, sure," but mainly ignored me and went on about his business. Now showtime comes and everything's great; the Shriners, public and producer, all happy with

the show. As was his professional custom, the Elephant Supt. had his herd ready 2 acts before and as he had a couple new elephants, I used to go out there with him to help move props and generally, back him up. So, we got a firsthand view of the action and the Illusion act. As the climax came, I told my pal, "Watch this trick, it's great." The straight jacket went on, hung by his heels, then the rope lit afire, as he was hoisted aloft up in the building.

What nobody prepared for, not even me, was that burning pieces of the rope-wrap would fall burning to the floor, setting the nearly-new red indoor-outdoor carpeting afire! General panic ensued on the floor with prop men, prop boss, Shriners, building guys all scrambling to put out the several sections of burning carpet out.

The public, though, thought it was just outstanding and were all on their feet, cheering for our fellow Italian, now free of his bonds. I'll have to admit, it was spectacular and they were still trying to put sections of the fire out while we were working the elephants. Sort of like a mist machine which gave a strange effect to the whirling Jumbos. But, at the next barbecue, it was the subject of much light hearted joking. Just another day on tour with the circus! God Bless America!

.....

Harvey Esto and Vern Mendonca write: We have changed our Circus Chatroom to Yahoo. First you must sign up with Yahoo.com. Registration is free & there is nothing to download or install. After you have registered (don't sign up for "voice") please link to club to join. <http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/circusstarsandfans>.

When you first go into chat, it will ask you if you want to download new version of chat. Click on yes, but it's not a download. It will take you right into chat. (I fumbled my way thru it and got connected-took awhile, but well worth the fumbling!-Cherie)

So far, we have come up with 2 nights for chat. Wednesdays at 5 pm PST, 8 pm EST and Sunday at 5 pm PST, 8 pm EST. The Club is open all the time, so you can go in and read or write messages or just meet friends there. (This was a great time! After finally finding the right place to be, I couldn't believe how fun it was. It's like a 10 person group call-folks from the West Coast and East Coast, all writing at the same time, asking questions, etc. Poor Vern had to leave to go eat supper! Mozart & I were having so much fun, I forgot I had to type Back Yard that night! What a kick it is, typing questions and having everyone write you back! This could get to be a habit. So, take the time to try it-it took me about 20 minutes to get to the right place-but it is fun!)

News From Our Circus Friends

Chuck Meltzer writes this following letter and asks that you write your nearest zoo using this or your own text:

Historically, the zoo and the circus have a common heritage and owe each other much in animal care expertise. The "zoo world" for whatever reason, has often seen fit to ignore this fact. As a novice animal keeper in the mid-50s, much of my training came from the circus graduates employed at the San Diego Zoo. These lessons were invaluable to me for over 35 years.

At this time, the traditional circus, with animals, is threatened by the so-called animal rights activists; more appropriately called "the terrorist cult of human-animal separatists." We can all remember the many zoo-animal mistakes made in the many badly conceived aspects of the endangered species act. The regulations were very complicating to the captive propagation of endangered species. HR 2929, proposed by Calif. Congressman Farr, could have many problems to zoos in the future in their elephant breeding using blood lines from circus animals. More importantly, if one studies the agendas of the various "animal rights groups" one would be sadly misinformed if one thought zoos would be immune to the actions of such groups. They desperately need target groups for the focus of their attacks in order to plead for funds from badly mislead donors who assume their donations will be used to help animals in distress.

A study of the IRS declarations, now available to all, show this is not the case. When these groups have destroyed the traditional circus, the zoo will be next. Vancouver B.C. has already seen this happen. First no circus, now no zoo! They have targeted numerous zoos already, San Diego, Disney Animal Kingdom, Busch Gardens, etc.

This is the kind of "testing the waters" originally done to the circus. The Humane Society of the U.S. has already published their plan to destroy the "traditional zoo" and to take them over for their financial gain. Even retired executives earn over \$300,000 a year from H.S.U.S. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is under FBI investigation for terrorist activities. The Performing Animal Welfare Soc. is behind Farr's anti-circus HR 2929. This group operates a "non-accredited zoo" that has numerous violations. A real conflict if there ever was one. When will this end? Only when the food industry, bio-medical research, zoo, circus, clothing, rodeo, etc. fight to stop this plague. Nothing is immune, no animal usage! Sincerely, Charles I. "Chuck" Meltzer.

Harrison Sayre writes on Feb. 14, I attended the **Sterling-Reid Circus** in the Showplace Arena in Upper Marlboro, MD. Thanks to the courtesy of Dutch Crawford, who is managing the performance and Francisco Forasini, Ringmaster, I have the detailed list of the performance as follows:

Wild West Production; Niclolas Wynn, high wire walk; Chepiakovas, horse riding Russian bears; Koko Kramer & Clowns; Straps, Vilan; Lyra, Christine Zerbini; Cradle, Espana; Arab Tumblers, Moroccans; 3 rings of Liberty Horses; Vinyl Pitch; Tiger Illusion Act-Koko Kramer; Espanas, Giant Swing; Trampoline, Espana; Nidoken, Skip Ropes; Pitch; 3 rings of web; Bicycles, Koko Kramer; Russian Bar, Nidoken; Elephants, Joe Frisco, Jr.; Incline Motorcycle, Espana. It was good to see Dutch again and I enjoyed talking to Francisco about his family's act, many years ago (As he put it, "When I was a kid.") Thanks also for the kindness of Tuffy Nicholas. I have many pictures taken with his dad, Count Nicholas, and Rosalie, his sister. There was also an Elephant Ride, Pony Ride, Haunted House and Titanic Slide concessions. The show did a big business with balloon and light pitches. The show was better this year as last year they had to perform on spongy mats laid over a hockey rink and were unable to put up aerial rigging! (Thanks, Harrison. Sterling-Reid will perform in Normal, IL on March 18. See you there!)



**THANKS TO
PAUL PRICE**

**FOR A GREAT JOB OF
TRIMMING BOO'S FEET**

KEN "TURTLE" BENSON

A Visit To Chimera-Hawaiian Style

By Rich Deptula

Past CFA President Rich Deptula of Lorain, Ohio, is in Oahu, Hawaii visiting for a month with his very good friend and circus fan, Ken Ghirard of Honolulu. They first met at the 1965 CFA Convention in Seattle and have remained the best of friends ever since then.

What a wonderful surprise Rich had when he got to Hawaii but to find Jim Judkins' Circus Chimera opening the following day for 3 days at the Bishop Museum grounds. What a beautiful sight from the highway the big blue tent made. It was a sight to behold. Rich and Kent went the second day of the 3 day run. They went for the 2 p.m. performance. The top was about 3/4 full on that afternoon. I am not going to do a review of the performance as this has been done many times before. I will say that we both enjoyed the performance very much.

The show was made up of the Chimal and the Rosales families. There was no flying act in Hawaii. There were a lot of other performers in the cast and I must say I did not get their names. The performance has changed somewhat from their 1999 program.

Alex Chimal was not working that day due to a back injury, but still the performance was great. The public loved the show. The circus has been on several of the Hawaiian islands and will leave sometime around Feb. 22. The costumes were outstanding, so was the music and lights. They have a wonderful teeterboard, juggling acts, aerial straps by a member of the Chimal family, a skipping rope act, Perch Pole acts & Adagio to name a few of their acts. If this fine Circus Chimera plays your area, make sure to take the time and go see this Circus of the Future. Also seen on the lot was Mike Gorman, doing bookings and marketing and Gopher Davenport was in charge of concessions on the midway.

Thank you Jim and your staff and crew for all of your hospitality shown to the both of us. Aloha.

Circus Model Builders Plan 2000 Display

Plans are now being made for the Terrell M. Jacobs and Dennis M. Gilli Rings of the Circus Model Builders giant celebration and Lot 2 gathering, Circus Mania 2000, to be held Sept. 21-23 at the Uniontown Mall in Uniontown, PA. This will be the third appearance at the mall for this group. In the past, members from as far away as California have displayed their models and memorabilia in a show featuring as many as 107

displays. The event will be open to the Circus Model Builders as well as the Circus Fans, Circus Historical Society and the Carnival Historical and Model Builders. The purpose of the club is the preservation and display of circus models. All scales are represented from tiny z scale to full size. The Uniontown Mall has been a very successful site in the past with its great cooperation and excellent location. Discounted rooms will be available at the Holiday Inn, located across the street.

Plans call for many displays, vendors, circus videos, snacks and the ever present, Bull Room. A dinner, breakfast and ladies luncheon will be held. Guest Speaker at the dinner on the 21st at 9:00 will be Diamond Jim Parker who will talk about his 25 years on the road as a clown. Jim promises some very funny stories on his years as producing clown and secretary to Cliff Vargas of Circus Vargas fame. Jim has been a circus model builder for many years and has one of the largest, private circus collections in existence. He is also the namesake of the Diamond Jim Parker Ring of Tampa, Florida.

Plan to put this event on your 2000 calendar. Information on displaying, vending or just visiting can be obtained from the following: Rege Amend, 794 Morgantown Rd, Uniontown, PA 15401; Bob Foster, 18 Lemon St, Uniontown, PA 15401; Bill Merchant, 716 Penn Ave, Brackenridge, PA 15014.

Vendors: Jerry Schaub, 1722 Leolyn St, Pittsburgh, PA 15210. Visit the Circus Model Builders web site at: www.circusmodelbuilders.org (Thanks Bob!)

Earl Krauzer writes he is going to DeLand for the opening of **Beatty-Cole**. Send us a review, Earl! AND he and his lovely wife, **Bernice**, are going to Sarasota for the CFA Convention in April. **Vern Mendonca** writes he is taking his 14-year-old son to the Convention. Hope I will get to see you both there!

Gee Gee Engesser writes she went to the Parade in Atlanta and had a great time. "It was one mile just full of circus. It was great to see that again. What a sight to see the 13 bulls and all the liberty horses, camels, llamas, miniature horses, bareback horses and riders. Then there was all those beautiful old wagons from Baraboo that had from 4 to 6 horses & one hitch of 6 so cute little dapple gray ponies to pull them with such beautiful harness and **Dave Hale**, with that amazing camel hitch, was outstanding." (Thanks, Gee Gee)

CHS Convention, Bloomington, IL Sept. 6-10!!

RUMBLINGS FROM THE CRUMMY

By Brian Nunn

*Low energy wire fence: A darn good invention. We used this facility during the day while under close supervision; the elephants got to play. And be themselves. They all recognized the perimeters of the fence. The fence was a great aid; harmless to the elephants. One of the elephants I called Meany, one of my many favorites, would concern herself with the baby bull (like an aunt); she's chasing birds and butterflies (with huge enthusiasm, she weighed 10,000 lbs.) It all was a lot of fun to watch, it was like a regular herd of elephants.

When, as it happens too often these days, some nut, claiming official function, says, "You can not have hairless animals exposed to an electric fence." Me, being the designated front man, has to say, "What about those hogs in every state that have these fences?" He says, "That's different, they're for slaughter." I'm thinking, "Hmmm, this is food for thought." The boss knows me pretty well and gives me the sign to back off. So, I let the regular front-end people take care of it. Anyway, we lost the corral and play yard for the elephants. As a result we're supposed to keep the elephants on the picket line, unless we're practicing an act. Well, this is a secret, you understand.

All us animal guys got up at 3 a.m. and took elephants, horses and whatever lead stock we could control (It's kind of hard to lead an Emu through bushes and trees) and took 'em all for a forage and walk, sometimes a little adventure. It's nice to let loose some energy once in a while. (Another secret; there's some people that have no idea what excitement and adventure are) but don't tell anybody. I wish I was one of those kind of guys that are as smart as the animal he's working. It's been fun Lord, thank you very much.

*The incomparable H.J., once yelled down from the line of 14 elephants (waiting to go in for Spec), cuss word, cuss word... "Romeo, you're confusing those elephants!!" (Now, don't get me wrong. H.J. taught me some of my best tricks.) But, at the time,

I had 2, large teenage African males, a good sized female African and an 800 pound male Asian to keep under control while standing in line. No problem, except once in a while, I felt I had to keep these critters' attention, so I'd talk, dance and give commands they could all deal with, like, "Move up, get over, come here, back up," in quick session.

Those of you that have been in that situation, I hope will sympathize, but, if not, I got the job done, until the time came for the boss to say, "Go ahead."

Then, my little baby elephants would back up, go around and tail-up; stand there until the rest of the elephants in front got it all moving. Maybe I was good and maybe I was a clown, I don't care. I got the job done and nobody got hurt. Which brings me to this: just because you get caught loving animals and wanting to put yourself out for their comfort, does that make you stupid? A lot of people think so. Elephants made my life more interesting than any (you name it.) I'd find myself thinking for them or find myself being out-thought, set up, knocked down, picked up and even bragged on. Some of them liked me. For me, they smell good, warm and comfortable, unless there's onions or broccoli around, but that's another story.

* I've spent cool spring nights sleeping next to, sometimes underneath, a baby, in between two adults, Mom and Aunts, with dear, old Dad standing guard, a 10,000 pound, breeding male. Rex is sleeping on the hay stack a few feet away. Let me tell you folks, it don't get any better than that. Then again, if it does, you go do it and tell me about it. I've been around some pretty hot stock, horses and elephants. They were well trained (I had something to do with this at times) but were smart and strong enough to test your ability to control them. There in, comes the fun and challenge, 'cuz if you hesitate or they fail to volunteer, to make your job and theirs complete, you'll find that the next time you tell or ask the animal to do something for you, they will remember the last time they got away with misbehaving (kind of like children) and as a result, your job is harder and sometimes more dangerous; forethought, patience and using tried

and true methods, got me through. There were some animals that made me terrified and doubt my sanity. But, it was my job and my life.

First rule, "Nobody get hurt." Remembering this, I'd try to predict and out-think the critter and the situation. There are a few animal people that can successfully do this alone. I prefer a qualified back-up, but I've done it on my own. For you concerned, misinformed folks, this process does not involve harm or terror (unless it was me.)

It just takes repetition, patience and experience. Once again, there are a lot of criticizing folks that have absolutely no respect or care what it takes for animal people to make a living (7 days a week, 24 hours a day.) They seem to enjoy making a lot of noise about a few, unfortunate incidences, rather than seeing the whole. (I'll repeat, they don't care.) For crying out loud, if we don't take care of these animals, who will? I never wanted to take anything away from the animal, I just wanted to figure out a way to get along.

* Speaking as an animal enthusiast, I know that critters have been used for work and entertainment for longer than the calendar. All of a sudden, there are some concerned people (used to getting their own way) that want this situation changed radically. What about the Amish (horses), racetracks, rodeos, zoos, parks, pet stores, police and all the others that use animals in one form or another?

I'm sorry about there being no humor, but it's hard to come by these days. Bucky wrote in his book, it's unrealistic to keep critters without them paying rent somehow. Of course, I'm not going to try to teach my neighbors' mini-poodle to juggle. (Although Mel Hall probably could have.)

If you have something that's dangerous and have to present it as though there's no danger, it can be a problem. I was taught to do just this. I think it's incredible that most people are afraid of a big dog and think they can walk in and pet a tiger, chimp or elephant. But, it's true, I've seen it many times. It makes me doubt the solid mental ground some of the activists stand on, it's unrealistic.

*In a perfect world, we get to hear what we want

and how we want. It seems to me there are a lot of people that have it that way, but in my opinion, they're very misinformed. But, again, they like the way they see and hear things too and for their own comfort. I believe it is what's called a fantasy. Those of us that live in the real world, especially the animal part of it, can't afford all those nice, flowery fantasies.

Bad news is the part that's paid attention to. It's human behavior, I suppose (that's why I've preferred animals.) In fact, I think that if spacemen traveled the far reaches, they'd have to be of superior intelligence. Therefore, I think they'd avoid this planet like the plague (pun intended), after seeing what we've done to it.

Paul Ingrassia writes he AND **Tommy Hanneford** equally shared the sponsorship of **John Herriott** for the Ring of Fame. Sorry for not mentioning Tommy.

Charlie Simpson said **Peggy MacDonald** called to say **Gus Bell**, of flying act fame, has passed away. More in the next issue of Back Yard.

Tammy Wallenda was here in Bloomington last week, in advance of the **Jordan World Circus**, which will be here the 29th. Some of the acts coming are **Hawthorn Elephants**, **Shane Johnson's tigers**, **David Zoppe**, **The Rolling Diamonds**, **the Flying Pages**. Report in next issue by your editor. Asst. Editor, **Mozart**, will want to meet the tigers and get a report from them!

Earl Finger sent along a newspaper clipping about **Circus Flora** that will appear in the next issue. Circus Flora will be performing in St. Louis May 5-21. Although I haven't been with them since 1994, I can still take care of **Bert & Ernie**, the goats! Need a house manager, **David**??

Ringling reports New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has proclaimed March 16-April 2 "Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Days" in the Big Apple. They are also preparing a spectacular parade in Washington March 27! Please visit their web site at: www.ringling.com

News From Our Circus Friends

Harry Gordon writes The Third International Circus Festival in Budapest was a delight. It had a good mixture of new & veteran acts. Most delightful was the superb organization. The shows started on time and ended on time with outstanding prop crews and no gaps between acts. No dragging on for 4 hours as can happen in Paris and Monte Carlo. The organizers get my gold prize (and plans to return to the 4th Festival in 2002) for their efforts. The only animal act performing was from Russia. Nesterov presented a pair of leopards, uncaged. They entered on leashes and walked around the ring curb to the center, then to 4' pedestals. A leather shielded pony stood between them as the female jumped to the pony's back, the male leapt to her pedestal; then she to his. Then, they reversed it. Never in America. While jumping and exiting, the cats were unleashed. Imagine the line of lawyers!

Evelyn & Christian Marinoff appeared with their lovely springboard Pas de deux enjoyed by so many last season at Baraboo and at Budapest. It was our pleasure to see Marina Osinskaya perform. The veteran performer's presentation was absolutely perfect, ascending the slope wire, then exhibiting beauty and elegance on the high wire.

The runaway favorite was 10-year-old Zhang Fan. The lad from China not only mastered the slack wire, but the audience as well. From his entrance to his exit, Fan held the audience's attention as he exhibited his accomplishments. I hope you get to see him some day as he handstands, then hand walks on the wire. He rides an unicycle as tall as he, then does it on his head. His dismount is from a swinging wire which launches him into a somersault in air as he lands amidst thunderous applause. There was never any doubt that Zhang Fan would carry home gold.

The Silver Peirots went to Marina Osinskaya and to Hungarian hand-to-hand strongmen, the Rippel Brothers. Bronze Peirots were presented to Lajos Nereus for his tight juggling act, the double Russian Swing act of the Didyk Troupe from the Ukraine and China's Hunan Troupe, which did 4 four turns.

The elegance and ambiance of Monte Carlo are part of the magic which make the festival everybody's favorite. 4,400 people gasped simultaneously as the curtain parted and an elephant on a rolling globe bathed in smoke and blue light made the most spectacular entrance of this year's event. Franko Knie was on hand and presented 2

elephant acts with such style that the spectacular opening was only a beginning. The act is an illustration of what Monte Carlo is all about. Here you will see only the best. (Except for that really awful juggler last year who sent in an edited video and was an embarrassment to all.)

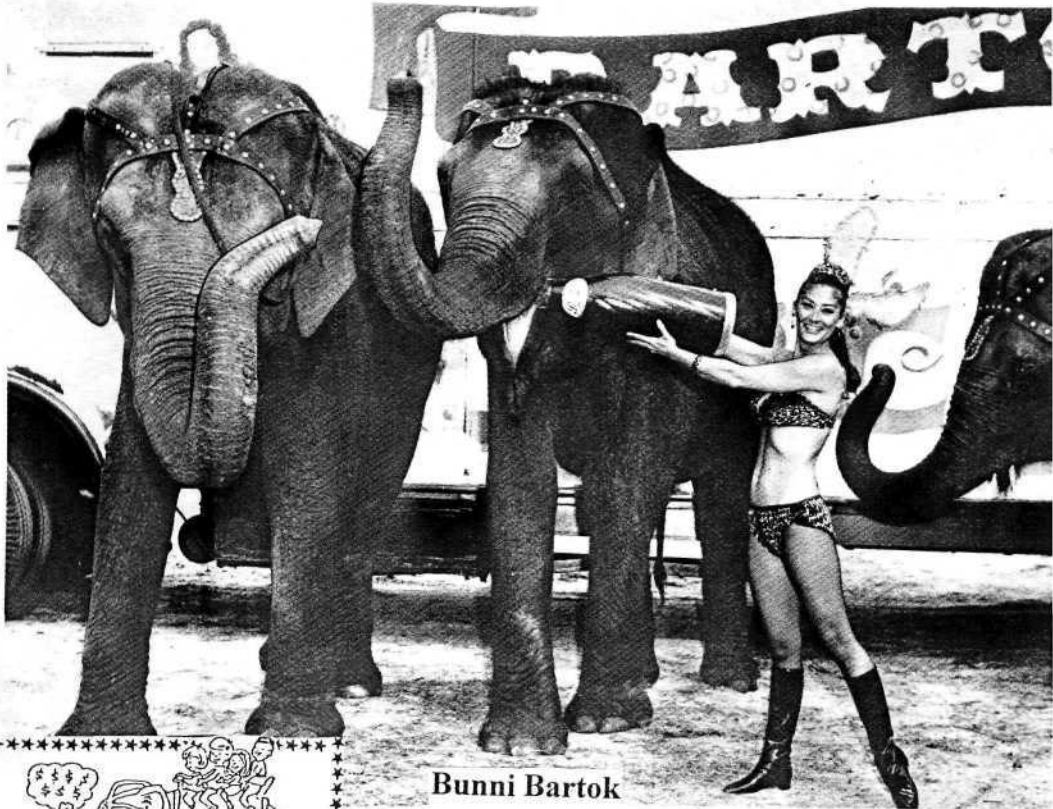
Before I name the prizes, I should note that it was wonderful to see Jeanette Williams at Monte Carlo. This year, Jeanette was a member of the Jury which had the unfortunate task of making choices.

3 Golden Clowns were awarded this year. Anthony Gatto turned in technically perfect performances to win his Golden Clown. One of 2 performers from the U.S., Gatto's speed and style and his absolute lockstep with his music provided the most dazzling juggling exhibition of this tour. My notes don't specify, but I remember seeing 10 rings in the air.

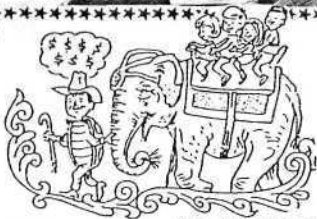
The acrobatic troupe of Poyng Yang, China, presented a flying act with a catcher at either end and one in the center. Such an array make for some interesting flying, including a young woman who, launched from the end catcher, did a triple to the center and another to the other end. A double triple. Impressive enough to catch the gold. The Tchernievski, from Russia's Rosgoscirk, provided a spirited teeterboard act for Golden Clown number three. Three Silver Clowns were awarded. The Hunan Troupe won silver for their large pole act. Vis Versa, the male/female acrobatic adagio from Cirque du Soleil's Quidam, were a popular act and drew silver. And, for his presentation of a lively lion act, Martin Lacey, Jr. was awarded a Silver Clown. Martin is the son of Susan Lacey, known for her cage presentations by U.S. audiences.

This fan looks forward to an even more exciting festival next year as Monte Carlo celebrates its 25th Anniversary. (Thanks, Harry. I hope to hear about the other performances Sheelagh Jones attended! Sheelagh???)

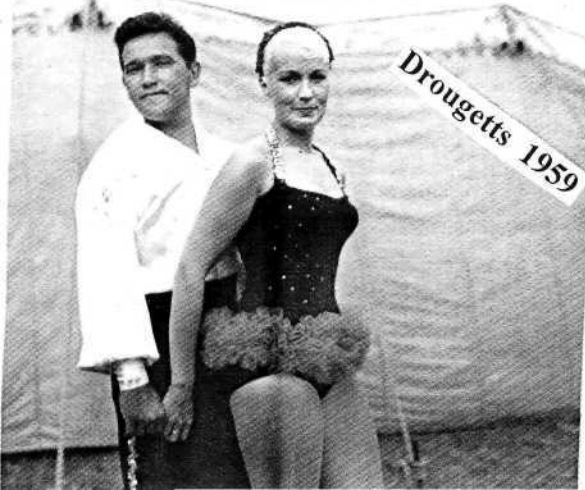
Carson & Barnes reports Sergey Dotsenko & Mariela Cavallini were married in December. Chris Daves and Paola Cavallini were married in January. Lucy Loyal is a new grandma, Josie had a girl in December. Joining are the Bilea Troupe of Romania. The new tent will be 50' shorter. Jennie, now a year and a half, has been working with her trainer & best friend, Tim Frisco, developing her new act-which will be Center Ring, of course! Don't forget to take along Animal Crackers for her and her Mom when you visit! Order your 2000 Route Cards-\$29.95 and 1999 Route Book-\$20. Check: A.C. Beach Corp, POB J, Hugo, OK 74743.



Bunni Bartok



KEN BENSON 5619 ANTOINETTE ST.
SARASOTA, FLORIDA 34232
1-941-320-9775





THE FLYING WARDS