

BACK YARD

Volume V, Issue #88

March 31, 2000

Home Joys & Grievs of the Circus Folks (The Literary Digest-July 18, 1931)

Down came the frail girl in a dizzying plunge from the top of the big circus tent to the hard-packed dirt of the arena. The audience cried in horror. Workmen came on the run. The circus physician arrived with his professional-looking black case of remedies. Maude Millette, who, John Gordon tells us in *The Home Magazine*, "was paid \$200 a week to place a rubber mouthpiece between her teeth, by which she was drawn to the top of the tent and then whirled around swiftly," opened her eyes.

The tragedy was happily incomplete. The mouthpiece had broken from its fastening and Maude had fallen. But she was alive, altho terribly bruised. "You're worth a dozen dead women," said the doctor, thinking to comfort her. But Maude burst into tears. She was not concerned with such matters as her own life or death. No. Like many of her sisters, in times of great stress, her first thoughts were of something quite different.

"Loo-ook at my teeth!" she cried. "Three of them gone! And I had them filled with go-gold o-only yesterday!" Fresh sobs shook her frame, we read.

"And I paid the dentist, too!" she mourned. Maude Millette thought nothing of the perils of her job. Circus women, as a class, don't think of such things. Now and then one of them is injured, but generally the recover. They may quail at crowded street crossings, but they take the hazards of the high trapeze and the tight rope in stride-just as the secretary, the saleslady, and the housewife take the dangers and annoyances of their jobs in stride. Their off hours are not devoted to apprehension of what may happen at the next performance, as Dixie Wilson, who writes out of her own experience as a circus woman, reiterates in *Good Housekeeping*. Off hours are devoted to embroidery, shopping, mending, laundry, babies, perhaps, and, in short, anything to which women ordinarily devote themselves. (Continued on Page 4)

Cole Bros Circus





Women's Work Is Never Done!



Teresa Morales 1999



FOX 75 March 6, 2000

THE FOX !!!

Dear Friends,



As I stated in my last letter, with two little toddlers there is really no time left for anything. I am trying hard to do a good job of it, but at 72 this is practically impossible. There are not enough hours in a day to keep ahead of time, specially there are also the animals, 2 ponys and two donkeys, one of the donkeys is very sick and then there are my 5 dogs also and three dogs from Tammy. But as I stated before I am trying my best. Oh ya, the kids are two and three and then there is the older who is eleven and has to be brought to school every day and picked up. There is the food to be prepared the laundry to be done and mainly running after the two little ones who need every second of the day and one of the dogs is a puppy who also gets in to everything. If it isn't the children it is the puppy. Well like I said I have my hands full and every minute free I am trying to sell the ads for Showfolks. Two more month and then thier mother will take back over and then I can do a good job again. Really this is stupid telling all of you this as you know what it means to take care of kids, but at my age it just is a little harder. I am just trying to excuse myself for neclecting all of you so much.

Well happy news is there Sylvia Hernandez had a baby boy. Mother and child are doing well and Grandma Liza Rosaire is back with her husband Derick Rosaire, bubbling all over with joy.

Now I need to get the sad news over. Ray Baudette passed away Feb 8th at a nursing home here in Sarasota. He was known most for being an agent. After he quit performing that ws his life until he got to old and had to go in a nursinghome. He was a member of Showfolks for many years.

Also we lost John Bantock, on March 3rd. He was also for quite some time a member of Showfolks. He used to have a book store and forwarded mail for many performers. He had sugar diabetes and lost one leg a little while ago and shortly after that they had to take his other leg. I guess this was just to much strain on him and he lost the battle with life. Rest in pease my Dear Friends.

Now to happier things. Showfolks had the first dinner with our new President and he ask Cha Cha Meluzzi to put it on the dinner and she made lasagna. First she was told there were 80 reservations, contrary what I told her, usely there were 50 people. Well a few days later she

called me and told me now there were 120 reservations, well Dale informed me that 108 showed up. The dinner was a big success and every thing was set with candle light and all the trimmings. Everyone was happy and as I was told the food was just surpurpe. Sorry I missed it but with two little toddlers it is just to hard to go any were.

Oh yes before I forget, I have to make a correction from the last letter. Noby did not coordenate the Superball web, she did some big commercials. Here I go again, I do not remember it all and as I did not get it in writing, I do not like to lay an other egg.

Oh yes, I also was told that I am the Fox of dead notices. I am sorry, but I believe most of you like to know who left us. Please forgive me. I promise, I will not write my own obt, someone else has to do that, or maybe I just vanish in to this unknown world with out anyone every finding out.

I also like to apologize to Showfolks that I am for the time being unable to patisapate.

Lots of us met at the birthday party of Daviso Cristiani. Boy everyone showed up. All the Cristianis who are still around and so many others. I again will not name any of the names as if I would forget one I will go to Devils Kitchen. But they were just comming and going. Ann did a great job.

By the way Nina Unus is back working. They called her to help out while the new girl went on vacation. The girl came back, picked up her check and informed them she will not be back. So Nina is back doing her job. Jeanny Sleeter Singleton did quit for good she informed me and is doing OK.

There is a printer out west who really layed an egg. He printed for a town the 29th of March and the date was 29th of Feb. I guess he forgot that this was leap year. Lucky the advance person cought the mistake right away. You know, Bloomington IL was really popular this year with circuses. They had 4 of them and all of them in Feb. One even two days after the other. Boy, who is doing the booking?? No one will make money like this. Hey Sherry, did you get to see all of them? Which one you liked the best? I guess no coment, right?

Well the weather here in Florida is great, except we do need the rain very much, but every day is beach day, for the snow birds this weather is really wonderful, not to hot and you can go every day to the beach.

This is all I can think of at this time to tell you at this time.

Lots of Love,

Your Fox



Home Joys of the Circus Folks....

The circus, no less than the city, has its "Main Street," devoted to quiet domesticity. Like Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's lady, circus women, business women, and housewives are sisters under the skin, even tho their environments may look different.

Both Mr. Gordon & Miss Willson lead us out of the brightly lighted arena into the dressing-tents, the cook-tents and living quarters and present a vivid and unusual picture of circus folk at home-concerned with dental work, runs in their stockings and letters from home, rather than with the danger of broken bracing wires and insecure grips. First of all, Mr. Gordon says this of the rewards a circus career offers to women:

Does this risk of limb and life pay? Is it worth while? Are the women happy? Salaries are good and the performer is enabled to save money. Living expenses are defrayed by the circus. A woman rider of average ability (from a circus view-point) gets \$75 a week. If she can turn a somersault on the horse's back while the animal is in motion, an additional \$50 is added. A back somersault is worth from \$200 to \$250 a week.

Among the leading circus performers of today are those who trace an unbroken lineage back to the time of Shakespeare. For 250 years their families have been acrobats, have lived and died under the great, white canvas and have handed down the fascination of the tanbark to their children and their children's children.

Continuing this "peep" behind the scenes, Mr. Gordon comes down to cases. Turning to "The Biggest Show on Earth," he asks: Did you know that there are 60 children with the show-the offspring of performers? Did you know that there are 4500 meals served daily to the grand total which goes to make up the circus? To say nothing of the 760 horses! Nor will we dwell upon the exactly 100 clowns and the 800 performers. We shall stick closely to the women folk.

Circus women embroider, knit and darn in their spare time. They talk-they even gossip. They play bridge-some of them well-and act like everyday human beings. It sounds a bit unromantic, for, naturally, you expect romance under the big top. But truth is truth.

Circus women lead a healthy, fine, outdoor life. Their work necessarily keeps them in fine physical trim. They can not dissipate; their work is too exacting. Steady nerves are synonymous with safety and even life.

The life is not the strain it appears to the casual observer. Special trains give comfort that no ordinary Pullman

sleeper can furnish. The long cars are divided into large staterooms, akin to the cabins on steamships. There is material comfort. They performer is at liberty to do what she pleases the moment her act is done. She may even go to sleep. Her meals are served promptly-and good meals, too. Social life is simple.

There are no whoopee parties. But midnight luncheons are not uncommon. Neither are outdoor picnics when the chance comes. Dixie Willson concerns herself with the details of circus domesticity. How are dressing-tents arranged? When are meals served? How is laundry managed? What about children? Her narrative ranges over the entire nation-adventures and misadventures in Indianapolis and Texarkana; special problems on the circus lots of St. Louis and Omaha. First of all she describes the dressing-tent, thus:

The dressing-tent is a large, oval enclosure, divided by a wall from ground to ceiling, into 2 halves, one for gentlemen and one for ladies, a privacy upon which there is absolutely no infringement. Not even a husband may enter his wife's dressing-room, nor a wife her husband's. In each half about 130 trunks are placed in a circle around the side and in a double row, back to back, thru the center, each trunk in the same place every day. Some have had the same place for 10 years! A hybrid combination, the ladies' dressing-room, of the fantastic and the domestic!

Side walls fluttering with bright, little, sparkling skirts and gay, iridescent bodies; pale tights and rainbow shoes pinned up by their ribbons and in the shadow of this, the busy laundry buckets, the ironing, the baby-tending; a lady in calico and kid curlers solemnly fitting a Sunday silk over a pneumatic figure standing on its unconvincing wire leg in the aisle; someone resplendent in the flags of all nations busy getting buttons sewed on her husband's shirt and exchanging apple pie recipes with somebody else clothed in soap-suds, standing in a bath bucket!

In the center of the tent is an ice water barrel; and each performer has a chair and 2 buckets of rain-water beside her trunk and a rug, if she wants one. Circus trunks are the old fashioned box variety and of uniform size, so they will pack evenly into the wagons. Each lady's trunk cover is lined with cretonne or linen or silk, on which pictures and show routes are pinned.

At 3:30 every afternoon "there would rise to the top of the cookhouse the white flag with its red letters 'Hotel.' Dinner ready to serve." Then we read:

(Continued Pg. 6)

Home Joys of the Circus Folks....

The freaks would come hurrying down from the sideshow, the giant carrying an armful of midgets if the ground was rough or the grass high or the distance far. The bearded lady's beard would be wrapped in a veil, the 3-legged man's surplus member neatly carried over his arm. The legless lady, laughing & talking quick French to her husband, trundling the chair in which she rode.

A contented and conceited lot of people, the freaks, conceited over the things for which you pity them; the smallest midget making it clearly understood there are none smaller; the armless girl very haughty about the typewriting speed of her toes!

Contented, for the most part, tho the bearded lady, who was past 60, always seemed a lonely and pathetic figure to me.

She had a good deal of money and a husband who was very kind to her, she said, but never did I see her smile. And her eyes were filled with sorrow.

All day she talked to a marmoset, a handsome, impudent, bead-eyed creature who sat on her shoulder and defied any one to take him away! Even when she died, he bit savagely at every one who came near and when they took him away, in spite of it, he died, too.

And I was sorry for the lion-faced girl, who was barely 19 and had a hauntingly lovely voice and a beautiful white body. She spent hours embroidering her lingerie of finest imported silk and linen. And she had an odd hobby. She had learned to say, "Do you love me?" in every language she had ever heard. A phrase for which, so ironically and tragically, she could never have any use! But the "strange people" are not so strange, after all. There is much hilarious fun in the sideshow and a good deal of joking between exhibitions.

Performers have dinner as soon as their acts in the show are finished. Table conversations include every topic but the circus; hometown news, the latest movies, the daily newspaper headlines! Sometimes your feet are on baked yellow dust, sometimes on a carpet of wild violets; sometimes you are wearing rubber boots and a slicker, the table in a puddle half-way to your knees. But it is all the same. The mint sauce comes up just as properly with the lamb, the potatoes are just as brown and everybody is just as happy!

.....
If you if have old pictures you would like to sell and you are going to the CFA Convention, please look me up! Thanks, Cherie.

News From Our Circus Friends

Ned Kronberg, White Bear Lake, MN, reports the **Osman Shrine Circus** will be held in St. Paul April 6-9 at the State Fairground's Coliseum. The circus will be produced by **George Hamid**. Thanks, Ned.

Jackie LeClaire, Sarasota, says the History Channel, on April 1, will air a documentary, "**Fire Under the Big Top**" on their "Wrath of God" series, 9 pm EST. It is about the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus' Fire in Hartford, CT in 1944. **Carla Wallenda** and **Jackie** were both interviewed for the program. Jackie was 16 at the time of the fire. This show was done by Tower's Productions in Chicago. Will look forward to it!

Peggy Williams writes "**Ringling** had their animal walk thru the tunnel and the streets of New York City March 15 at midnight on their way to Madison Square Garden. Both sides of the streets were lined with thousands of well-wishers, with many people yelling "Welcome back to New York" and "We love the animals." There were several dozen protesters who walked orderly along the sidewalks carrying typical signs with age-old pictures, chanting all the way. They were clearly a small, but, of course, vocal group. The most interesting part of it was at the end of the walk, as the animals were walking into the Garden. The protesters brought their own lighting equipment and staged a rally on the sidewalk across from the Garden for their own cameras. The majority of the plentiful media had already gotten their pictures of the elephants and had left by that time and the only people left were about 20 police and a handful of on-lookers watching these folks make their little rally. It was if they gave a party-and no one came. When PETA was mentioned by members of the crowd (re: mocking their new "drink beer, not milk" campaign) these folks were very quick to distance themselves by shouting, "We're NOT PETA." They did not say exactly who they were, at least, not while I observed." Thanks, Peggy. I'm sure the New Yorkers had a great time watching the elephants!

Hollywild Elephants Lose Home in Blaze

Inman, SC: Luna, Juno and Sidney didn't have time to pack their trunks when a fire forced them out of their home March 7. The 3 Africans escaped unharmed, but their barn was destroyed. At 7:45 am an elephant handler discovered the fire. The animals were evacuated in about 3 minutes. **David Meeks**, owner of **Hollywild Animal Park**, said their quick escape was due to the fact they are allowed to move freely in their pens overnight. "Had we had chains on them like some zoos do, we wouldn't have had time to get them out." Meeks said the loss was about \$350,000. He'll rebuild the barn and the elephants will stay in another elephant barn on site.

While surfing E-bay auctions, I have come across several with expensive items. The seller is in Dallas, Texas and he has acquired quite a collection of items belonging to **Bobby Peck!** I have seen 8x10s signed to Bobby, several contracts of Bobbys, and letters addressed to her.

One is a Shrine Circus contract and letter dated 1947 from Cleveland. The contract is for 3 weeks for \$250. I contacted the seller to ask where they got the items and he said they were purchased-perhaps at an auction, I don't know. It is a shame her personal treasures had to end up this way. The seller wanted \$25 for the letter and contract.

Jordan World Circus Wire Walker Injured

Earl Krauzer received this from his son, **Steve**. Missoula, Mt: "**Jimmy Tandosa**, 24, tumbled off his wire during a routine in which he thrills the crowd with a pretend loss of balance, falling 30 feet 3/25. Wearing nothing but a leotard, he crashed onto a thin pad laid over the concrete at the Univ. of Montana's Adams Center. When Jimmy fell, he landed about 5' from the first row of spectators, most of whom were children. A Spanish translator was needed to help emergency crews speak with him, a native of Columbia.

Late Saturday, he was undergoing surgery for a broken left wrist and broken ribs. He was also being examined for the possibility of a collapsed lung and hip and neck injuries. Hospital personnel said Jimmy is expected to fully recover. His medical bills will be paid by Jordan World Circus and by the Western Montana Shrine Club.

A visit to **Ringling's** home page, www.ringling.com will give you the story of the return of Marilyn Monroe's jewels after 45 years! Marilyn had worn the priceless jewels in March, 1955 at a benefit performance of the Ringling Circus. Milton Berle was the Guest Ringmaster and described her entrance as "one of the biggest, most powerful moments I'd ever experienced in my life!" The jewels, along with rare photos from the archives of Milton Greene (Marilyn's personal photographer) will be on display as part of the 130th Edition's Three-Ring Adventure through the end of 2001.

From the home page of the **Crocodile Hunter, Australian Steve Irwin**, comes the news of his mother's death. "On Feb. 11, Steve's mum, **Lyn Irwin**, was tragically killed in a single vehicle accident. Lyn, along with her husband, Bob, created and built the Australia Zoo in 1970."

Steve wrote, "We love you mum more than anything in the world. The pain of your tragic, sudden death will never wane. When you established Australia Zoo back in 1970, you started a conservation revolution. I'll try to keep Dad going. We're surrounded by the strongest family-Your Creation. As Australians or visitors to Australia, every single time you admire a native Australian animal-Lyn Lives!"-Steve Irwin.

Heidi Herriott writes "**Ray Dirgo** has agreed to sit with me at the CFA Convention and put together the artwork, slogan, etc. for us to use to create buttons, pins, shirts, bumper stickers, etc. to counter protesters. This will make whatever item we use this on much more saleable and possibly, a collector's item. I am really excited.

I will have a flyer/order form made up to hand out so I don't miss out on the opportunity at the Convention. I will hopefully enlist some help from CFA & CMB members to help with the mail order process." A proposed slogan is, "Save Our Jobs-It's a Jungle Out There!"

SEE EVERYONE AT THE CFA CONVENTION!!!

RINGLING RED: Washington DC-DC Armory: 3/28-4/9; Roanoke-Civic Ctr: 4/12-16; Charleston, WV-Civic Ctr: 4/19-23; Chattanooga-UTC Arena: 4/27-4/30; Peoria, IL-5/24-28.

RINGLING BLUE: NYC-Madison Sq. Garden: 3/16-4/2; Knoxville-Civic Coliseum: 4/6-9; Providence-Civic Center: 4/26-30; New Haven-5/3-7; Hartford-5/10-14; Hersey, PA-5/17-21; Springfield, MA-5/24-25; Albany, NY-5/27-29; Wilkes-Barre, PA-5/31-6/4.

BIG APPLE CIRCUS: 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!: Baltimore-Lyric Opera House: 3/28-4/2; Syracuse-4/4; Binghamton, NY-Forum Theatre: 4/5-6; Wallingford, CT-Oakdale Theatre: 4/7-9; State College, PA: 4/11-12; East Lansing, MI-Wharton Ctr: 4/14-16.

Barnum's Kaleidoscape: Chicago-3/29-4/30.

Carson & Barnes: McGregor, TX-3/30; Belton-3/31; Ft. Hood-4/1-2; Brenham-4/3; Navasota-4/4; Tomball-4/5; El Campo-4/6; Corpus Christi-4/7-8; Port Lavaca-4/9

Sterling-Reid Circus: New Orleans-3/30-4/2; Lafayette-4/3-4; Beaumont, TX-4/5-7; Galveston-4/8-9

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

Circus World Museum: Opens May 6-Baraboo, WI

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

Shrine Circus-Manchester, NH: 4/6-9

Tarzan Zerbini Circus-Wilmington, MA: 5/15-21

Hamid Circus Royale-Springfield, MA: 5/4-7

BACK YARD

is published twice monthly-(15th & 30th) by Cherie Valentine, 1522 Clinton Blvd., Bloomington, IL 61701. Phone: 309-828-0737. FAX: 309-438-5607. 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 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.

James Hamid describes for us the 4 Person Pyramid with the chair: Dieter Galambos & Sasha Pavlata were on the bottom with the shoulder bar between them. Tino Wallenda Zoppe sat on the chair on the bar with Aurelia Zoppe standing behind Tino. Once in the middle of the wire, Aurelia climbed onto Tino's shoulders. Tino then stood up. Once up, Aurelia then stood on Tino's shoulders! Watch for these great performers when they play near you!

IN MEMORY OF
RON BACON

A GOOD FRIEND
WHO WILL BE MISSED

KEN "TURTLE" BENSON

AND

THE ROBERTS BROS.
CIRCUS

Gamma Phi Circus By **Evan Brown**

Come one, come all to the 64th annual **Gamma Phi Circus** April 14th and 15th in Normal, Illinois. The show will take place underneath the Redbird Arena Bigtop on the Illinois State University Campus at 7:00 pm both nights. Pre-show will start at 6:30. Gamma Phi Circus is the oldest and largest collegiate circus in the United States and has been in existence since 1929. This year Gamma Phi will offer two new acts; the double cloud swing and the triple trapeze. They will also be reviving a few acts that have been popular in the past, such as revolving ladder and Russian bar. Several other acts will be presented, including the popular Russian Swing, German wheel, teeterboard, and Spanish webs, to list just a few. The performers have worked hard all year to present what could be one of the finest shows ever! For more information, call **Dr. Jerry Polacek** at (309) 438-2690. For group rates, call (309) 438-5444.

Lindemann's Seils-Sterling Tent No. 79

Circus Spring Fever

Featuring: Fred Dahlinger, Director of Collections and Research at Circus World Museum

This will be held at the Sheboygan, Wisconsin Historical Museum, 3110 Erie Ave. on April 8 from 11 am to 4 pm. The cost is \$12 per person-includes Museum Tour and Luncheon of baked ham and roast chicken. The Museum Tour of 4 buildings and the circus exhibit starts at 11:30, followed by lunch. Fred Dahlinger's talk begins at approx. 2 pm and will feature railroad shows.

For reservations contact Richard Hellhake, 434 Blackstock Ave., Sheboygan, WI 53083 (920) 452-5613 by March 31-Pay at the Door. There will be Tent election of officers and dues are payable at the meeting.

The Spring Gathering of the Commodore Nutt Tent #165 of Manchester, NH, originally scheduled for April 7, has been postponed until a later date due to a conflict with the annual Convention. Watch your mailbox for further information.

James Hamid reports Tino Wallenda Zoppe and the Flying Wallendas made history 2 weeks ago in

Indianapolis during the **Hamid Circus Royale's** run for Murat Temple. They completed the Four Person High Pyramid with the chair. The members included **Tino, Dieter Galambos, Sasha Pavlata and Auriela Zoppe.** (Thanks, James)

Circus World Suffers Another Loss

By Bobby Gibbs

The Circus World lost another of its main characters with the death of well-known and well-loved, Ron Bacon, on March 13. He was a personal friend and I really mean it when I say it was like losing a member of my close family.

Over the years Ron & Willeen and Rosa and myself spent many a good time over a great visit and Jackpots somewhere down the road. A man who could do anything he set his mind on, he was a great agent, promoter and later, a show producer, always able to come back to any date he played. I will miss him. He will live in my memories as a friend. Bobby and Rosa Gibbs. P.S. Ron, see you down the road. I hope you put up enough arrows, pal, for me to find the lot.

News From Our Circus Friends

On Saturday, March 16, **Amos and Mary Bolieau, Chuck and Judy Druding, Jack and Nancy Snyder and Ernest Tarbox** and his wife gathered at Merrill Auditorium in Portland, Maine to attend "OOPS!", the **Big Apple Circus** stage show. The auditorium where the show was held is a sight to behold. It was built in 1924 as part of the City Hall and has been recently restored. It was built in a terrace fashion, each row is on different level and spaced so that no seat is behind another. It makes for perfect viewing. We had seats in the balcony which were excellent. The show is a very high class production and is very fast moving. It has acts which had appeal for fans of all ages. However, a dog and a flock of budgies do not take the place of horses, cats or pachyderms for circus fans. Several of the acts could have been shortened slightly for a better balance. Nevertheless, the show has a very high rating.

RUMBLINGS FROM THE CRUMMY

By Brian Nunn

*Frank Thompson's Grumbings from the Crummy: Please, any showman or woman that has a jackpot to tell about, send it in. It's just for fun and that's why we're here. My stories are gettin' old, even for me. Anyway, here we go.

Fair dates, late spring, somewhere in Alabama. It's an 11 day spot, good business. The elephants have been with it (on contract) because the guy that owned it all had 2 elephants on the logo. Good enough, especially having rent free location on the midway for rides. It was the first year out with the baby elephant and Rex got along with the owner, so we always got spotted real good (lots of room). I remember mostly rolling grass hills, oak trees and more often than not, a good easy area to secure for the elephants. There's Gardner, Sue, Gyp and Myakka, a.k.a. "The Brat." We made the whole season with no mishaps or anyone gettin hurt. With the exception of Mr. Dawg, nailing a few fat, slow deputies and an occasional civilian, that had the bad manners and misfortune to wander inside the elephant perimeter.

One time a 400 pound deputy wandered (or rolled) over to Rex and says, "Hey, your dog bite me." That's when Rex's eyes lit up; he bites his tongue and the next thing happens, the guy's gonna get whacked with the 'ole man's hat (which hurts, believe me). But he just asks the deputy how bad he's bleeding, which usually results in the guy's embarrassment. (Mr. Dawg was taught to nip, not tear). But nooo—this guy has the dawg locked up for 11 days which cost us a lot to bail him out, plus double back or fly him to the next date. One of about a dozen times for Mr. Dawg. Rex said he was a typical elephant hand. Anyway, without the dawg there, it was a lot more work keeping those bulls out of being bothered.

*Whole different herd of elephants, at night; only the big male was on a single, the cows and baby were loose. I slept on some bales lined up in front of the line. When needed, my ride elephant, Sue,

would pull a bale out from under me, so I'd break it and feed everybody. There was a big horse there too. If anything out of the ordinary happened, one of the cows would blow or snort, waking me up; it was mostly late nite people, just stopping and looking. If anything else, I'd deal with it. These people had a great deal of respect for Rex and they left his elephants alone. Rex was testing my ability and sent me, Gyp and the Brat, off to get watered (about 300 yards away). Gardner and Sue could care less if the little heathen was gone for a while. But...Darling Gyp could use any excuse to have her own way. So...instead of letting her go off thru the backyard full of fair employees, I got her attention long enough for her to pick me up and put me on her back. I thought if she was going to boogie, it would be easier to stay with her, sitting on her neck. But all she did was make her way back to the Dept. with the Brat in tow. The people in the backyard thought this short cut was all great fun. The G Top (Blue Room) was most excellent, I guess I shouldn't say more. Ask me someday and I'll tell you some of the Jackpots. I watched the movie, "Elephant Walk." On the blow off of the movie, the hero says to his beloved, "Let them have their elephant walk, we'll build another house." How sweet it is. Come on movie stars and other want-to-be's, buy a BIG portion of Texas, say, from Texarkana to Beaumont. I was born 50 years to late; all the fun work has gone, almost.

*The entertainment business is strictly unforgiving, whether you're a good actor in a bad play or a birthday clown, unless you please everyone, you're slammed. It's like that old saying, "Everyone's a critic." In a performance, you can't stop in mid-trick, return, then try it again with polish. It looks bad. You might stumble, but unless you can't get up, you go ahead on with the routine. My best work was done before and after the act. It's between me and my charges. It's done in peace and understanding. If my charges had enough respect and felt at peace with me, they did the performance like regular life, which always seemed to please the ticket buyers.

"GRAB IT" Part II - By Earl Chapin May ISU Circus Archives (American Magazine, 1928)

Eddie Ward, of Bloomington, Illinois, speaks about his career. "Three times each day the performers sit, each in his own place, on a hard blue plank at the same table in the circus cookhouse or dining tent, side by side with the same persons, all season long. Each night each one occupies his regular berth in the circus Pullman cars, usually only half of the berth at that, for space is at a premium on a circus train as well as on a circus lot.

Of course, the unmarried girls have a sleeping car to themselves and are in charge of some married women, while the single men have their own sleeping car. But all the youngsters must be in bed by 11 pm. The circus management sees to that. And there's virtually no variety to circus life. Up at 7, out at 8. Breakfast by 9. Lunch at noon. Matinee from 2 to 4. Supper from 4:30 to 5:30. Two hours for visiting or mending in the circus back yard or for a little shopping in town. Night performance from 8 to 10-and then to bed, to wake up in another town. After a month or so of travelling, the different towns make little impression on the circus troupers. In fact, they all look alike to him. Towners seldom interest us. Still less do we speak to them. Our job, as circus flyers, is to entertain them for half an hour a day. Beyond that we seldom go. We live in the tents, among ourselves. With this daily, rather restricted, program, you can realize that if the members of my flying-return act didn't like their jobs they couldn't stand the discipline. Yet I've had flyers or catchers with me for 15 years. Most of them marry when very young, nearly always in their branch of the profession. That's natural enough because they are thrown together constantly. At one time I had 3 married couples in my act, not counting Mrs. & Mr. Eddie Ward. And marriages made on the circus lot are nearly always permanent. A divorce is still big news in circusdom.

You may be surprised that one can be a Flying Ward for 15 years and thrive on it. That's where another tradition comes to my mind. It is the tradition that we troupers lead such hard lives. Some of the days *are* dark & dreary. I've showed in 16 days of rain on end. When a circus strikes a rainy spell like that almost everything mildews on the show, including the dispositions of the company. Incidentally, the wardrobe and prop men are likely to 'blow' for drier fields. For weeks on end the male members of The Flying Wards have loaded and unloaded their own and their fellow troupers' wardrobe trunks and carried them, dripping, in and out of soggy dressing-

rooms, in addition to which they have hung, geyed and leveled their big steel rigging-a rigging which weighs 2 tons. And each night they have taken down, packed and loaded that same rigging. But, except from dampness, the women seldom suffer in any weather. Even when they double on tight wires and swinging ladders and, as iron-jawed butterflies, hang by their teeth in the big top's dome, they work no more than 2 hours daily. During the other hours they can rest or do whatever pleases them. Trouping does not make them old. And they have neither the time nor disposition to be dissipated. Good food and plenty of water and fresh air, to say nothing of their exercise, keeps them young.

Just look at my wife, Mayme. She has been trouping with me for 20 seasons, barring the 4 weeks she laid off each time she had a child. Mayme is now well in her thirties and doesn't make any secret of it, either. But she hasn't gained in weight or lost agility. Do you know of any mother of 3 children-a boy of 12, a boy of 8 and a girl of 5-who can, with her eyes blindfolded by a handkerchief and her body bound in a gunnysack, throw a double somersault across 40 feet of space into her husband's hands twice each day?

That's a good example of circus discipline. We've done that trick so often that she doesn't miss my catch once in 50 times. When she does get by me, she is always close enough so I can guide her with my hands and see that she falls into the safety net on her shoulders or her back.

Neither the boys nor girls in my act smoke or drink. They don't want to and I wouldn't let them if they did. But I don't smoke because it might affect my work. It's business before pleasure in the circus flying game. That's why I don't allow any liquor drinking, either.

What do members of the act earn for doing their daily bits? Anywhere from \$25 to \$100 a week, with food, berth and railroad transportation furnished by the management, unless we are playing fairground dates or indoor circuses in winter time. Then I pay board, bed and transportation, in addition to all salaries. I've saved enough in 30 years to buy a small farm near Bloomington, where I have a nice home and 2 big training barns. I also have a good 125-acre farm near Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I run those farms through relatives and make them pay. I'm going to stay on a farm when I get old enough to quit the road. That'll be about 10 years from now. Thousands of circus people have saved their money and bought farms. It's natural for us to go to farms. While trouping we are close to the soil unless, if we're aerialists, we're in the air occasionally!"

CIRCUS ROUTE BOOKS

1890s - 1940s

Here are some marvelous Route Books from
an old time circus man's personal collection.

All are in very good condition and
have been lovingly cared for over the years.

1892 Ringling Bros.	\$250	1922 Walter L. Main	\$65
1893 Barnum & Bailey	\$250	1927 Downie Bros.	\$40
1897 Barnum & Bailey	\$250	1905 Carl Hagenbeck	\$35
1907 Barnum & Bailey	\$250	1936 Tom Mix Circus	\$50
1894 Adam Forepaugh	\$240	1929 Miller 101 Ranch	\$70
1895 Walter L. Main	\$240	1944 Beatty-Russell	\$30
1895 Great Wallace Shows	\$240	1946 Sparks Circus	\$30
1912 Gollmar Bros.	\$ 80	1942 Ringling/Barnum	\$30
1913 Hagenbeck Wallace	\$ 70	1941 Ringling/Barnum	\$30
1927 Gentry Bros.	\$ 65	1939 Ringling/Barnum	\$35
1920 Walter L. Main	\$ 65	1936 Ringling/Barnum	\$35

Like so many old-timers, the owner needs the money,
he must sell. And he would rather they go as one group,
but he's offering them priced individually. If interested
in the entire lot, he's willing to sell them for one price-
at a great savings. Shipping is extra.

Contact Mike Martin, 3233 Dante Dr., Sarasota, FL 34235
Phone: (941) 365-8237 E-mail: donikerman@aol.com

A PAWS FROM MOZART

By Mozart Valentine

MEOW everyone, welcome back to my column. We have gotten several newspaper clippings about the Indianapolis Zoo's new baby elephant from Larson E. Whipsnade and would like to thank him. The keepers were calling the baby "her" until a name could be found. The African elephant is named "Amali" and they think it means Hope. The keepers looked at more than 4000 entries from newspaper readers. Elephant expert, Debbie Olson, said "she hasn't quite gotten control of her trunk. She purposefully steps on her trunk." Mealtime with mom, Kubwa, is a bit of a reach for Amali. She now tiptoes to reach the food by balancing her feet on her mother's leg. A real cutie!

At the Cincinnati Zoo, Ganesh, who just turned two, and weighed 213 pounds at birth, now weighs in at 2,042! Happy Birthday Ganesh! The Zoo also has a "Pachyderm Picasso!" Since 1990, trainer Cecil Jackson has been working with the elephants, paints and canvases to create colorful designs.

The Zoo's artist-in-residence, My-Thai, a 26 year old Asian, has done 3 special watercolor pieces for zoo benefactors and leaders. She created 3x4 feet paintings in about 20-30 minutes and uses brushes with extra thick handles. I bet I could do something like that, but I don't think Mom would let me! I could try it with "paw-paints" though!

Those of you in the Cleveland area can visit the Zoo to see "Kitra", a beautiful, 9 year old, 263 pound, white Bengal tiger. She is on loan from Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and she will be transferred to Potter Park Zoo in Lansing, Michigan at the end of April. Those of you in the Lansing area, be sure to go visit her and say Mozart said "Meow!"

My brother, Wolfgang and I had a great time today watching 2 squirrels biting the flowers off the Magnolia tree. Our tails were really wagging!

Well, that's about all for now. Please let me or Mom know about any Zoo news in your area. Since the weather has gotten warmer, the animals will be

out in the open air for viewing. Mom won't let us go outside, but we can watch Spring coming from in here! There are too many cars and other dangers for us to go outside. As Steve Irwin says, "Danger, danger, danger!" Meow, for now, Mozart.

.....
Kalahari Crash Survivor Trailed Elephants to Safety
March 7: A plane crash survivor who walked for 4 days across Botswana's Kalahari desert followed elephant trails to safety, fearing all the time he would encounter the beasts.

South African Carl du Plessis said he and the plane's pilot had wandered from one watering hole to the next in a desperate bid to seek help. There were 3 other survivors at the crash site in a remote lion-infested area. He said they had to walk on the elephant paths and that way they had water. He was more scared of meeting up with the elephants. To escape the heat, they dove into the muddy pools that the elephants used to bathe in.

At night, they could hear the lions but never came face-to-face with them. After nearly 4 days of walking, they came upon a desert camp and were then able to radio for help.

.....
It was reported that Kenya, the African elephant belonging to the Ramos Family died of natural causes. The early report stated it was intestinal problems and not poison that killed her. Officials are waiting for a detailed report from the necropsy.

.....
I would like to thank those of you that are sending in donations to help purchase a marker for **Mayme Ward's** grave here in Bloomington. **Bob Handley**, of Bloomington, has given me a name of someone here that might be able to help with the project, as he used to work at Park Hill Cemetery. There are quite a few circus performers buried here in Bloomington and I hope to get a list together of where they are buried, with a map of the cemetery, and perhaps, also, their obituaries that appeared in our newspaper. This would make a nice tribute to these performers. If you'd like to contribute, please send to: Cherie Valentine, 1522 Clinton Blvd, Bloomington, IL 61701 and Thank You.



1949



Teresa Morales



Cristiani Circus



Sells Floto 1924