

# CIRCUS REPORT

AMERICA'S  
FAVORITE CIRCUS WEEKLY  
OUR 11th YEAR

Number 46

November 15, 1982



ART and LORNA COOKSEY

# AGVA AND CIRCUS PERFORMERS

The American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA), which represents circus performers in both the Red and Blue Units of Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus, has a new president and staff. Under the leadership of Executive President Alan Jan Nelson, several highly experienced union and labor relations professionals have been recruited to give AGVA a new program which stresses greater democracy and better communication with the circus performers. This includes encouraging maximum participation in contract negotiations and more efficient handling of grievances. So far, this is what has been accomplished!

1) Field Representative Amy Olga Sultan, Controller Vincent Griesi, and National Contract Coordinator Marvin Moschel have met with Ringling performers at least once a month since March of this year. In these meetings performers have participated in framing proposals for a renewed collective bargaining agreement between AGVA and the Felds.

2) For the first time, Circus artists participated directly by being present for negotiating sessions with the Felds. These included Elvin Bale, Ernie Kitson and David Kohn. Their input in these discussions was fruitful for all sides involved. The Felds got to hear first hand accounts of life as a performer in Ringling Bros. This made for much lively discussion back and forth.

3) The Artists in both the Red and Blue shows have rejected Managements last contract offer as insufficient. Issues of wages and job security are still unresolved. These artists will no longer accept increases of \$5 per week in the minimum wage scales.

In the meantime, a decertification petition, signed by at least 30% of the circus performers has been filed with the National Labor Relations Board. But in our recent meetings with the artists in both units, AGVA representatives have discovered that many of the cast members who signed the petition did so with great misunderstanding as to its real meaning or the implications of such a petition.

Many current and former Ringling performers, like Wally Naghtin and Doug McValley, have volunteered their time and energy to help AGVA defeat the decertification effort by informing the Ringling artists about what it means to work without the benefits of a Union contract. Wally Naghtin, who is leaving Ringling at the close of this season to pursue new arenas, has spoken with those in the Red Unit about the horrendous conditions which prevailed in the circuses of this country prior to AGVA becoming the performers' collective bargaining agent.

Doug McValley visited the Red Unit in Boston Garden as an official field representative of AGVA and spoke with the Urias Troupe, the Carrillos and many other long-time friends and associates there. He pointed out how important the AGVA Welfare Trust Fund health insurance is to him and other former Ringling performers who are now working as independents. Addressing a full cast meeting McValley expressed his confidence and enthusiasm in the new AGVA leadership and in the programs that AGVA has embarked on in the Circus.

If you are a circus performer, or have a variety act and wish to know more about AGVA and its programs, please write to: Amy Sultan or Marvin Moschel, AGVA, 184 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010.

Or telephone one of the above at: (212) 675-1003. If you identify yourself as a circus performer you may call collect.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!  
YOUR PARTICIPATION IS WELCOME!**

# Show Dates

Beatty-Cole Circus  
 Nov 15-18 Miami, Fla.  
 19-21 Sunrise

Brickle's Wonderland Cir.  
 Nov 15 Lake City, SC  
 16 Kingstree  
 17 Bennettsville  
 18 Mullins  
 19 Bowman  
 20 Batesburg

No Elephant Circus  
 Nov 20 E. Hampton, NY

Ringling-Barnum - Blue  
 Nov 17-28 E. Rutherford  
 NJ

Ringling-Barnum - Red  
 Nov 9-21 Cleveland, Oh,

## --- OTHER DATES ---

Disney Great Ice Show  
 Nov 16-21 Detroit, Mich

Disney World on Ice  
 Nov 9-21 Atlanta, Ga.

Garray & Tomio  
 Nov 17 Los Ang. Calif.  
 18 Lancaster  
 19 Riverside

Ice Capades  
 Nov 16-21 Oakland, Ca.

Scott's Medicine Show  
 Nov 15 Vincennes, Ind.  
 16 Paducah, Ky.  
 17 Clarksville, Tenn  
 18 Columbia  
 20 Blairsville, Ind.

## --- MAGIC ---

Pf. Miller-Magic Time USA  
 Nov 14 Carthage, Mo.  
 15 Webb City  
 16 Rolla  
 18 West Plains  
 20 Poplar Bluff

Felix Snipes  
 Nov 19-21 Mobile, Ala.

# LADIES and GENTLEMEN,

## CHILDREN OF ALL AGES!

We have lost one of the Circuses loveliest ladies, Betty Wendany.

Betty wore several "hats" in her lifetime . . . loving daughter, devoted wife of Fred, adoring and supportive Mother of Heidi and to all we fans that were lucky enough to sometimes share a part of her in the backyard, she was MRS. CIRCUS.

The first "hat" that many of us saw Betty wearing was as a part of an excellent act that included her husband and daughter. It was a balancing act that required skill, strength and split second timing. Betty was slim and lovely in black satin tights, tails and top hat and she could style with the best of them.

The next "hat" we saw her wearing showed her enthusiasm and professionalism as the Ringmistress/Announcer on the Big John Strong Circus. John has said many times that she was of great value to him in many areas of putting the show on. She gave integrity and respect in all her dealings with her fellowman. And I'm sure she would agree that the years she worked with John, gave her the groundwork to form her own "Betty Wendany's Funs-A-Poppin."

With the formation of her own show that played to many, many delighted children, we saw still another "hat" as she managed, promoted and created her own interpretation of an excellent show for kids of all ages. The show was always a lot of laughs and excitement and wonder. If one watched parents attending with their children, the true meaning of "children of all ages" was there for all to see. When the music started and Betty picked up the mike, she gave her all to each of us under still another "hat" as "Betty Spaghetti." Betty had a way of handling even the most mischievous child so that the enjoyment for others was not lost.

One of Betty's many kindnesses was recognizing the longing in a circus struck young fan and finding a way to let the fan participate in a performance or two. She then paid that young fan, so they could say they were a "pro." That money is framed and hangs on the wall of that young person's room and Betty will live forever in a treasured memory.

The fans loved her, treasured her, respected her. She gave us so many happy circus and personal moments. We shall miss her, but we'll remember the lovely slim brunette and treasure the memories she gave us.

We love you Betty, and you'll always be Center Ring in our hearts.

Fifi, Fred and Rachael

# East Coast News

by FRANK ROBIE

For nearly two decades, Nutley, NJ, was the home of Mr. & Mrs. Frank Butler (the celebrated Annie Oakley). The house at 300 Grant Ave., is gone but the memory of Annie Oakley is still strong in Nutley. The Nutley Historical Society has a small collection of personal letters, photographs and small artifacts from her career.

It is said that some of her rifles are still in the bank vault for protection. During the Depression, WPA artist Paul Chapman painted a mural for the Nutley Post Office entitled "Return of Annie Oakley". The mural depicts the Wild West Show with Buffalo Bill off to the side and with Annie Oakley on horseback shooting.

The Middy Streeter publication is to be titled "I Ran Away With the Circus Cookbook." Kevin McCloskey will provide original art work. Stories and recipes came from the Bird Millman scrapbook, Loretta Twins, Sacha Brunn and others. Undoubtedly a very interesting volume. Release is set for about Dec. 1st.

Jim Tinsman, Big Apple Circus star, has perfected the Chinese Drop which he included in his hand balancing act this summer. This you should see, it is superb.

The Moslem Temple of Detroit, Mich., has the honor of initiating the First Shrine Circus. In 1983 the Shrine Circus will celebrate its 75th anniversary and the Hanneford Circus will produce it. Plans are to bring in a menagerie and a side show and in conjunction with the Detroit Historical Institute exhibit a display of Shrine Circus memor-

abilia. Circus celebrities who have made Shrine circus history will be honored one evening. A history book of Shrine Circus will be published.

How wrong can you get department? Mr. Todd Robinson was erroneously identified here as Toby Johnson. To Toby Johnson, whoever you are, our regards. To Todd Robinson, of Neptune, NJ., and editor of the 1982 Hoxie Bros. Tour Book our regrets.

Also, the Carousel Mobile at Willow Grove Park is plastic and not authentic merry-go-round animals and they do not turn to music. There is a clock with four large brass bells that chimes every quarter hour at the Mall. Willow Grove was once called the Summer Music Capitol of America and such famous bands as Sousa, Prior, Gilmore and others played there during the summer. Sunday concerts are planned by the Mall during the Fall and Winter.

And another note to Beer Can Collectors. Schmidt's Beer salute to Philadelphia's 300th anniversary does have 1793 First U. S. Circus Held on can three but you may have to buy a case to get them all (Thash not too bad ish it???)

A privately owned film of the 1954 Ringling Bros. Circus was shown at the Felix Adler Tent Annual Banquet which may be among the best footage ever seen of the Sarasota rehearsal, train departure and canvas days. After nearly three decades the color and clarity is magnificent.

## In Memoriam

ELVIRA LIAZEED (92) died almost two years ago. She came to this country with her four sisters as the Granada Sisters and went to Ringling in 1906. Elvira and her husband Hadji later had an Arabian troupe.

VINCENT F. REYNOLDS (72), long active in Circus Fan activities, died Oct. 29th in Florida, following a stroke. He retired to Sanford, Fla. in 1977 after having lived since birth in Norwalk, Conn. Private services were held in Sanford, Fla. on Oct. 31.

In Norwalk he was a key factor in several engagements of the Beatty-Cole Circus, sponsored by the Tom Thumb Tent, CFA. Part of the proceeds for these highly successful engagements were used to establish a scholarship fund for students in the Norwalk Public Schools and to produce a videotape, still in use in the schools, tracing an appearance of the circus from first contact and agreement through advance, arrival, set-up, performance and teardown and departure, and even the circus lot the morning after, both before and after the clean-up crews did their work.

## Show Acts

The Eddie Zacchini Olympic International Circus played to capacity crowds at the Charleston, SC, South Carolina Fair.

The show included Eddie Zacchini, producer; Bill Strong, ringmaster; Mike Pike, bandleader, plus Dime and Connie Wilson, come-in, Overture directed by Mike Pike, The Francarros, foot juggling, The Amazing Mr. Bell, Trudy Strong's dogs and liberty act, Dime Wilson, comedy number, Estrelita and Frank, cradle act, Wendy and Walt, and Johnny Luxem's wheel.

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## In the mail

from Helen Billetti Warburton

About my article "European Visit" in the Nov. 1st, issue of Circus Report, Page 15.

I visited "Circus Barum" and not "Barnum." Also the circus paper in Salsburg, Austria, was "Gerd Siemonet Circus Barum" not "Barnum."

In the circus I saw in Amberg it was the Gerd Siemonet-Barum Lions and Tigers" not "Barnum."

CHABELA CASTANO, of South America, is working with Sole Bros. Circus in Australia where she does an iron jaw number. Her brother, JIMMY, performs in a Globe of Death act.

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Phone: 602 - 325 - 4808

**BILLY WOODS** who used to have the Flying Dells, is now operating a theatrical agency office in Reno.

**GERARD SOULES** is currently with the

**Available for 1983  
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7943 Haskell Ave., No. 2628

Van Nuys, Calif. - 91406

Phone: 213 - 782 - 2356

**- BOOKS -**

**BRING ON THE CLOWNS** by B. Hugill. The accepted history of clowning. Large size, fully illustrated. . . . . \$ 12.95

*(Note: This book was incorrectly priced in a previous ad).*

**STEP RIGHT UP**, the pictorial history of Medicine Shows \$ 9.95

**ASHMUR PUBLICATIONS**  
Rte. 4, Woodland Acres, Box 1487  
Starke, Florida - 32091

Disney on Ice Show. He plans to join the Royal Hanneford Circus for its next tour.

Bill and Ann Cramer  
1500 - 97th Avenue  
West Miami, Fla.

To all Circus Report readers,

I would like to thank all the wonderful folks at Hoxie Bros. Circus who helped me through my first season as a cat trainer.

I would particularly like to thank Mr. Hoxie Tucker, who lent me all the equipment I needed to transport and present my animals. I thank John Lewis, who hired me and lent me a great deal of support throughout the season.

The following people: John Herriott, Eddie Kuniman, Charlie and Jessie Moyer, Sharon Ward, Butch Cappola and Halley Strickland, gave me invaluable help and advice without which I could never have put the act together.

My wife, Ann and I would also like to thank Mike and Arlene Miller, whose help and friendship throughout the season was greatly appreciated. We are fortunate to have worked with such a great group of people.

Thanks,

Bill and Ann Cramer

## Show Visit

by *FRED (Bigfoot) ICKE*

This writer was able to visit the Carson & Barnes Circus at Austin, Texas, on Oct. 28 and enjoyed a chance to see and talk with many show folks.

Visitors on the lot included Charles Roark, old-time side show Punch & Judy performer, Logan Pritchard, magician.

The clowns did a swell job with Jack Jackson, head clown, assisted by Richard (Buc-

kles) Perale and lady clown Flip Flippen.

Ted Bowman was on the front door and was assisted by two sweet ladies, Pebbles Inman and Robin Fultin.

Norma Cristiani was on the show. The last time I saw her was back on her father's circus in Gonzales, Texas.

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LEON PINTER has acquired a new camper for his show business activities. The new piece of equipment offers more spacious quarters for both Leon and his wife.

Dallas, Texas  
November 1, 1982

Mr. Don Marcks  
525 Oak Street  
El Cerrito, California 94530

Dear Don:

We are happy to report that all is well once again with the Armando Farfan family! As you know, our flying act was disrupted temporarily because of our son Gino's unfortunate accident in Dallas. During our Ringling performance, while attempting his routine three-and-a-half, Gino slipped, hit the catcher's bar, and severely injured his neck. The expert medical treatment he received at Baylor Medical Center assured his recovery and hastened his recuperation.

Mr. Irvin Feld and Mr. Kenneth Feld were most sympathetic and understanding during this difficult time, and they graciously agreed to release us from our contract for the remainder of the 1982 season. This enabled us to be together as a family while Gino recuperated in the hospital, undergoing hours of therapy. Also during our stay there, our son, Tato, had a minor operation to correct a chipped bone in his elbow which resulted from his fall earlier this year.

As a family, we have begun again to practice our flying act and to consider additional phases of our circus careers. We shall be forever grateful to the Misters Feld for their support and encouragement, and we shall always treasure the warm relationship we have experienced with them for the past nine years while under their guidance with their Ringling Bros. Circus.

We hope to do many more things in our circus entertaining, but not without remembering the fine people with whom we have been associated. We thank them all.

Most sincerely,

THE FLYING FARFANS

~~Anna and Armando~~  
Gino and Tato

---

**OPENING AT CIRCUS CIRCUS IN LAS VEGAS**  
**December 19th**



THE FLYING FARFANS

## Tigers Killed

Zoo officials at the Detroit (Mich) Zoo have put their ailing tigers to death after a court ruled the "zoo had used reason" in determining that the tigers should be killed. The three tigers were said to be ailing and an autopsy was planned. A fourth tiger said to be "mean-spirited and possibly dangerous to other tigers" was described as being in good health. An alternative was being looked into regarding this animal.

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# Great American Circus

by *GEORGE C. BINGAMAN*

Allen Hill moved the Great American Circus to Koons Park in Linglestown, Pa., on Wednesday, July 7th, to play to two straw houses. Sponsored by the Lions Club, Hoxie's second circus provided a strong assortment of tanbark entertainment serving notice that this tent is a special circus in times when big top shows rarely come to American towns.

Great American makes a fine appearance with some new rolling stock. The performers are splendidly attired.

Side Shows are rarely seen these days. Great American continues this traditional extra entertainment masterminded by Billy Martin who pied-pipered 175 into the side show tent when I chanced upon the scene. The bannerline, ballyhoo and attraction series were good for one's circus heart yearning for this kind of nostalgia. In addition to dazzling rola bola and rowdy gorilla parody, Billy's debonair ringmastering puts Great American in the top echelon.

Numerous strong single displays were intermixed with several three and two ring displays of swinging ladders, balancing, juggling and footmanship via rola bola and foot juggling.

My top award goes to Dave and Ivey Upton's uncaged cougar act. Hoxie had a great assortment of animal displays including three ponderous pachyderms, two dog acts, llama, camel, ponies and horse, but Upton's cougar stood out with walk-overs, jumps, comedy and well-paced feats. I have not seen a better uncaged animal act for a long time, and performing cougars are rare.

Ming Wong's hair-hanger is steller showmanship. She gets all the women's support with an opening strip tease drop of about a dozen costumes from her lofty station. With her beautiful appearance she maintains rapt attention as she returns to an aerial restaurant opening her meal with rice via chop sticks as she balances a lap tray followed by tea and capped with a cigarette on an eye-catching long-holder which accentuates the scene. She has an amazing series of diverse aerial postures which help to establish her act as tops in hair-hanging.

Yum Yum, child contortionist, is high class

circus completely commanding the audience attention and serving notice that she is already a star.

Ian Garden, Jr. adds three fine acts - liberty ponies, dog and pony revue and dressage up on "Pretty Boy."

Carlowe Abraham's head balancing was unique performing atop a metal ball and then on a soccer ball above the ball deserves special honorable mention.

Elizabeth Macias's foot juggling is as good as you can see and what a beautiful lady she has become!

The order of displays: Spec - Circus on Parade; Foot juggling, Elizabeth Macias; Rola Bola, Billy Martin and Cherrie; Dave and Ivey Upton's uncaged cougar; Coloring Book pitch; Ming Wong, hair hang; Ian Garden, Jr.'s dog and pony revue; Clowns and "Seeing Stars" (Buck Nolan, Bonnie Bonta, Marco); Head balancing, Carlowe Abraham; Yum Yum, contortion; Oscar Macias, hand balancing; Peanut pitch; Cha-Cha the clown dogs (Bonnie Bonta); Mongo-Bongo gorilla parody (Billy Martin); Intermission.

Ian Garden, Jr., pony revue; Swinging ladders (Cherrie Frey, Rebecca Macias, Ivey Upton); Clowns and "The Sharpshooter"; Balloon Pitch; Ian Garden and "Pretty Boy", dressage; Three elephants, Andrew McCulluch and Oscar Macias, cloud swing.

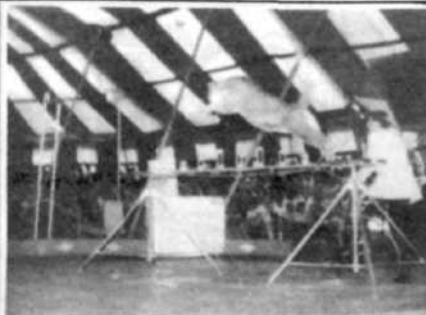
Congratulations to Hoxie and Allen! They are keeping the tent circus alive with such masterful style. They are successful circus entrepreneurs in tough times!

Photos by the author with this article are:

- 1 - Cherrie, Ivey, Becky
- 2 - Billy Martin's side show pitch
- 3 - Ringmaster Billy Martin's rola bola
- 4 - Elizabeth Macias, foot juggling
- 5 - Dave Upton's uncaged cougar
- 6 - Yum Yum, contortionist
- 7 - Big Top and Bally line on the Great American Circus
- 8 - Ian Garden, Jr. up on "Pretty Boy."

## PEOPLE

AUSTIN MILES, ringmaster/chaplain has returned to his home in New York. His address is: Forest Hills Plaza, 98-05 - 67th Ave., Apt. 7-0, Forest Hills, NY 11374.



# New Book

Quite an unusual circus book has just been published. It's called "The I Ran Away with the Circus Cookbook," and its subtitle is "An Amazing Collection of Stupendous Recipes by Some of Those Remarkable People Who Live in the Shadow of the Big Top."

Along with a wide variety of recipes, as you might expect from circus people, there are also many authentic old time circus illustrations as well as originals by the talented artist Kevin McCloskey. In many cases the recipes are accompanied by short recollections by the performers, thereby adding a particular charm that makes for good reading as well as delicious eating.

The following is a good example.

## HEAT WAVE VEGETABLE EXPRESS

Hal Haviland, performing dogs, comedy pony, "Capers with Papers."

"I've had a professional act of one kind or another for over 50 years! When the show is experiencing a heat wave, cooking in a small trailer is out for me until after sundown. I carry a big refrigerator and experiment with all kinds of chilled and frozen between-the-acts meals at matinee performances. An old "mud show" cookhouse chef gave me the idea for this dish out west years ago when we were making long jumps on hot days and the blasted cookhouse was usually always late getting to the lots."

1 can tomato soup, chilled

Sour cream or plain yogurt

Assorted vegetables, chopped and chilled

Parsley

Grated cheese

Mix the tomato soup and the sour cream or plain yogurt, and serve it as a topping on your favorite vegetables, either cooked or uncooked and then chilled. Garnish all with parsley and grated cheese.

This cookbook can be purchased for \$5.95 postpaid from: Middy Streeter, 206 Thompson St., No. 7, New York, NY 10012.

# PEOPLE

ED PHILLIPS, of Wilmington, Dela., recently gave a talk about the circus for the local Methodist Country Home residents. He included music and slides with the talk.