

THE CIRCUS REPORT

AMERICA'S
FAVORITE CIRCUS WEEKLY
Our 10th Year

Number 11

March 16, 1981



THE KNEISLEYS

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In Memoriam

DON A. KOEHLER (55), known as the tallest man in the world, standing 8 ft. 2 in. high, died at his home in Lake Villa, Ill., where he was recuperating from a heart ailment, on Feb. 25th.

Koehler was a former president of the Paramount Tall Club and had retired three years ago after a 25 year career as a salesman for the Big Joe Mfg. Co., makers of hydraulic lifts. He was listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's tallest man.

Report

THE FAMOUS BUD TEAM

Budweiser has announced they will build a new 60,000 square foot building in Oakland (Calif), in which they will store their brew between the brewery and bar.

As a part of that announcement the famous team of Clydesdales will appear at several local area spots, including the Golden Gate Fields race track in Albany, Alameda, Richmond and then on March 14th they will be in the annual Oakland St. Patricks Day parade.

The company has more than eight Clydesdales, but those selected for the team are all at least three years of age, stand at least 18 hands high, must be bay colored, have four white stockings and feet, a blaze of white on their face and have black manes and tails.

ACTS - Are you listed with us ?

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PEOPLE

HORACE DUNGAN, Hardware and Lumberman of Sedan, Kansas, has sold the old Opera House to the city of Sedan and donated half of the sale to the city. Plans call for renovation of the building which would then house the Emmett Kelly and Historical Museum.

MARI-JO COULS was named a charter member of the Hoxie Tucker CFA Tent at its raising ceremonies at Kissimmee, Fla. on Mar. 1st. Also attending were EDNA ANTES and HARRY HAMMOND.

GRIFFIN, escape artist, was featured on national television in a segment on P. M. Magazine which was aired on March 9th. The special included a challenge from the Police Chief at Guthrie, Okla. and some rare films of the Great Houdini.

Dr. HOWARD KILLOUGH, of Winfield, Kans. National Clown Chaplain of the COA, and ADEN LOWRY, Chairman of the Kansas CFA, were honored in Emporia, Kans. on Feb. 21st by the State Clowns, for their work with the organization.

CLARK McDERMOTT is rapidly recovering from his recent surgery and plans to get back to work soon. He hopes to fill in some of his open time quickly.

JOHN PALMSTROM is on tour with Meadowlark Lemon's Bucketteers, doing his unicycle and juggling act. The tour is presently in the St. Louis Area.

Show Dates

Aut Mori Grotto
Mar 17-22 Youngstown, Oh

Beatty-Cole Circus
Mar 15 DeLand, Fla.
16-17 Ocala

Carden Int'l Circus
Mar 16 Joplin, Mo.
17 Miami, Okla
19-21 Tulsa

Carson & Barnes Circus
Mar 14 Paris, Texas
15 Bonham
16 Grand Saline
17 Longview
18 Tyler
19 Athens

Hubert Castle Circus
Mar 17-18 Eugene, Ore.
20-22 Seattle, Wash
22-28 Dayton, Ohio

Circus Odyssey
Mar 20-29 Mayaguez, P.R.

Circus Vargas
Mar 17-19 Costa Mesa, Ca.
20-23 Laguna Hills

Cole All Star TV Circus
Mar 16 Richfield Spgs, NY
17 St. Johnsville
18 Morris
19 Norwich
21 Margaretville

Franzen Bros. Circus
Mar 15 Mt. Vernon, Ala.

Garden Bros. Circus
Mar 20-21 Allentown, Pa

Great All American Circus
Mar 20-22 San Bernardino,
Calif

Hubler Int'l Circus
Mar 17-22 Youngstown, Oh

Donnie Johnson Circus
Mar 19-20 St. Petersburg, Fla
21-22 Tampa

Olympic Int'l Circus
Mar 2-22 Chicago, Ill.

Ringling-Barnum - Blue
Mar 17-22 Charlotte, NC

Ringling-Barnum - Red
Mar 17-29 Baltimore, Md.

Royal Hanneford Circus
Mar 20-Apr 6 Detroit, Mich

TNT & Royal Olympic Cir.
Mar 17-21 Portland, Ore.

Shrine Circuses
Mar 20-22 Lafayette, La.
16-17 Lake Charles, La.
20-21 Pine Bluff, Ark
20-23 Wichita Falls, Tex

---- MAGIC ----

Abbott's Close-Up Conven.
Mar 20-21 Colon, Mich

Academy of Magical Arts
Mar 21 Los Angeles, Ca.

Prf. Miller - Magic Time USA
Mar 17 Melbourne, Fla.
18 Ft. Pierce
19 Vero Beach
20 Titusville
21 Orlando

Felix Snipes
Mar 20-21 Camp Lejeune,
NC

Show Time USA
Mar 16 Gibsonburg, Ohio
17 Fosteria
18 Mt. Gilead
19 Bryan
21 McComb

--- OTHER DATES ---

Bryan's Clowns, Inc.
Mar 18-21 New Castle, Pa

The Gutis Family
to Mar 22 Chicago, Ill.

River's Aqua Mules
Mar 20-22 Chandler, Ariz

Rolling Diamonds
Mar 17-22 Ft. Wayne, Ind

World Figure Skating Show
Mar 20 Oakland, Calif.

Royal Lichstein Circus
Mar 17 Huron, S. D.
18 Madison
19 Sioux City, Iowa

WANTED

YOUNG LADY for Aerial
work - Good Season.

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Report

AQUA CIRCUS PLANNED . . .

Construction is now underway for the newest of many fabulous attractions at Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus World.

The Aqua Circus is being built in conjunction with Bob Maxwell, president of Maxwell Associates, foremost producers of water and diving events, that features world famous championship divers.

The Aqua Circus is scheduled to open at the circus-oriented theme park this month, and will feature a splendidly brilliant ensemble of multi-talented divers.

Within the group of six divers there will be dynamic displays of the blazingly brilliant torch dive, stunningly acrobatic high dives along with the comedy capers of hilarious diving clowns.

At present the group is scheduled to perform an average of three shows per day (show time will vary throughout the peak and non-peak seasons).

ATTENTION

PRODUCERS, PERFORMERS AND AGENTS

Regarding an ad placed by Steven Wallenda in the March 2, 1981, issue of Circus Report (Page 20).

Please be advised that in as much as Steven Wallenda has never been trained by or performed with Karl Wallenda or "The Great Wallendas," I cannot assume any responsibility for his actions.

. . . . Helen (Mrs. Karl) Wallenda

in the NEWS

EX-JAYCEES HELD IN FUND MISUSE

A report from Asheboro, NC, indicated three former officers of the Jaycees, including a one time national president, have been indicted on charges of using money intended for charity for their own benefit and to establish phony Jaycee chapters.

The indictments stem from a North Carolina state investigation that followed allegations that more than \$190,000 in Jaycee funds had been diverted for other uses.

PEOPLE

ETHEL LUCKEY has been hospitalized at St. Mary's Medical Center in Madison, Wisc., and PAUL LUCKEY has been hospitalized in Baraboo, Wisc. Both would enjoy cards and letters.

SUE and RUDI LENZ report one of their chimps has a beautiful baby born on Feb. 26. and weighed 3 lbs at birth. The new youngster has been named WALLY.

JOE MYERS will again be the producing clown with Robert Bros. Circus this season, and his wife HELEN will work in the show office.

ANN and ERNIE GREEN (Astabula, Ohio) circus fans, held a surprise birthday party for IVY GUNGA (Gunga Family Circus) this past month.

JIM BEGLEY has reportedly bought the former Circus Williams and changed its name to Circus Holiday and set a June 1st opening.

BRANDON SCOTT, magician, is appearing at the Nugget Casino in Sparks, Nev., this month.

Notice

Effective May 1, 1981, the subscription rate for Circus Report will be priced at \$20.00 a year.

Anyone who would like to renew or extend their subscription may do so at the old price of \$15.00 a year, prior to the above date.

PEOPLE

DAVID HAMMARSTROM, author of the book "Behind The Big Top" has been invited to be the guest speaker at the CFA Convention in Arizona this June.

PAMELA OBANDO, daughter of high wire performers **CARLOS** and **CAROL OBANDO** was the subject of a photo story in the Democrat and Chronicle in Rochester, NY, on Feb. 10.

VICTOR VAN METER, magician, has been working at the Sheraton Inn Airport in New Orleans, where he works for the Sunday Special Brunch.

HARRIS REYNOLDS (wire walker and former member of the Young Nelsons act) who was married to **STANLEY WATHON's** daughter **DENISE** (before her untimely death) moved from Richmond, Va. with **BUNNY**, Denise's Aunt, to just below Savannah, Ga. Bunny died this past year, in her 90's, they were the famous Juggling Jewels and now Harris resides near his sister.

MARJORIE and **DAVID HACKETT** caught

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Report to Tommy Hanneford
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8 a.m. Tuesday, March 17th

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the Ringling Red Unit opening at St. Petersburg, Fla. and this month they are visiting the Beatty-Cole and Egypt Temple-Shrine Circus (Donnie Johnson).

ARTURO TROSTL, high wire performer, charged discrimination because of age when his high wire performance was cancelled by officials of Tampa's annual Gasparrillo Day program. The 70 year old performer as been performing in the annual event for the past 28 years.

MURRAY HILL, owner of two elephants used for rides at a shopping center in Pinellas Park, Fla., has been offering local residents all the elephant manure they want for gardens. It's all bagged and ready to go, he says, because it is difficult to dispose of.

TANNI LeLONDE, skater, is working with an ice show which is performing in Japan.

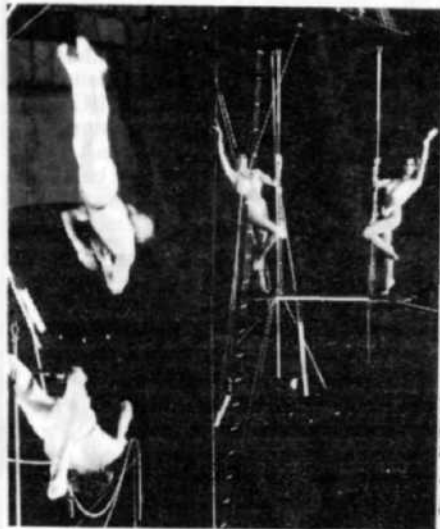
DR. HANK E. PANKY, former resident magician at the Circus Hall of Fame in Sarasota, recently presented his medicine show pitch/magic act for a series of Walgreen Drug Store district meetings. Off-stage Dr. H. E. P. is known as **BOB LANGIN**.

Report

TRIPLE TWISTING DOUBLE SOMERSAULT

Tom Robin Edelston, featured trapeze artist at Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus World in Orlando, Fla., is shown here completing the first Triple, Twisting, Double Somersault ever recorded in circus history. The feat took place at the park on Tuesday, Jan. 20th at 5:30 p.m.

The Triple, Twisting, Double Somersault consists of three twists and two laid out somersaults . . . a total of five revolutions completed consecutively in mid-air.



Tom's catcher, John Zimmerman, a member of Circus World's performing Flying Robins, expressed that he could not believe that the two of them actually held on to the wrist-to-wrist grip for the entire feat.

Tom, a tremendously talented 20 yr. old, first learned the trick by landing into the net one and a half years ago. It is only for the past year that Tom and catcher Zimmerman have been attempting the incredible.

During the past two months, the two flying sensations have been under the guidance of expert master trapeze artist, Faye Alexander, a one-time circus great presently a trainer at Circus World. The feat was video-taped and witnessed by several other Circus World personnel during a practice session in Circus World's Circus Pavilion.

BOOKS

BY MARJORIE J. HACKETT

CIRCUS COURONNE by R. Wright Campbell, published in paperback by Pocket Books for \$2.25 - An excellent thriller with a circus background about spies in World War II. Campbell really has to love the circus world and its performers. A quote from the book: (Page 48) "The circus is a world, he thought, separate and apart from the community of ordinary men. It should be a nation unto itself whose charter is founded in the sanity of love. Laughter should be its banner and humanity its shield."

THE RINGMASTER by Darryl Ponicsan, published by Dell Publishing for \$2.25 (in paperback) - A work of fiction but based on the travels of the author with the George Matthews Great London Circus during the season of 1976. A good book, but if you are offended by dirty words and explicit descriptions of the seamier side of the circus, then skip this one. You'll recognize some of the well known performers in this story.

PEOPLE

LAURAMAY MCKENZIE PETRILLO and her mother, **MILDREN MCKENZIE** recently visited with **DAVID** and **MARJORIE HACKETT** in Florida. Marjorie and Lauramay bunked together on the Ringling show, where Lauramay spent 13 years before retiring.

THE FORST SISTERS are back on the road with their Dad's magic routines, with two young helpers, their first appearance was at Showfolks of Sarasota Circus. They announced their return on a television show in the Tampa area.

Tom is the leader of the Flying Robins which includes catcher John Zimmerman, along with beautiful flyers Linda Stammen and Laura Rappa. The group performs daily at Circus World.

Next in line for the ambitious two-some is the quadruple somersault, another incredible and near-impossible trapeze feat.

Tom and John are working on incorporating the Triple, Twisting Double Somersault in to their spine-tingling show, performed several times daily in the park.

BOBBY and ROSA

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PEOPLE

THE BUSKERS PUPPETEERS will make their fifth appearance at the Ringling Museum - New College Medieval Fair in Sarasota, March 12-15 presenting the traditional Punch and Judy. The puppeteers are a Bomar Production, under the direction of co-owner Marji Langin.

JOEY JORDAN, juggler, is reportedly performing on cruise ships. He's set for the Bauer-Hall Circus date and the Dick Gustafson Vaude 81 Show.

RON URBAN has his icer set for "Gaslight Village" in New York for several months.

DAN SUMMERS, magician, is working aboard cruise ships operating out of Miami, as is vent **BILL BOLEY** and comedy **JOEY VANCE**.

ROLLONA ROLAND and **JACK CAMPBELL**, skaters, along with soloist **ARDITH PETERSON** are performing in an ice revue in San Juan.

BOB-O and **BOBBINO**, clown team, have inked the *Duff's Smorgasbord* chain of restaurants as their ambassadors and will appear at grand openings of the fast growing chain. Bob-O and Bobbino celebrated their 18th year of performing partnership and Bob-O's 42nd year in showbiz in January.

JERRY GOODSPEED, vent act, is appearing at the Ibis Club in New York City.

In Memoriam

BY KAREN CART

The Circus world has lost another of its long-time members. W. J. "Whitey" Thorn passed away Dec. 26, 1980, in Oklahoma City, Okla. Whitey was born Jan. 26, 1904, in Love Lady, Texas. In 1940, he joined Al G. Kelly-Miller Bros. Circus as an elephant man and electrician. There he met and married the former Mary Keys on Sept. 29, 1941 in Bucklin, Kan. Whitey and Mary were with Kelly-Miller until 1952 when they joined the King show. In 1954 they shook the sawdust off their feet and settled in Oklahoma City. Whitey became a truck driver for TIME DC Truck Lines and after retirement worked as a maintenance man for Ogden Foods, until his death.

Mary is also employed by Ogden; who has the concessions at the Myriad Convention Center in Oklahoma City.

They may have shook the sawdust from their feet, but not from their hearts. By being at the Myriad, they were able to see and visit with many of their long time circus friends that came there with indoor shows.

Mary lives at their home at 302 S. E. Snyder Court, Oklahoma City, Okla. and keeps busy with her job at the Myriad. Whitey had countless friends and will be missed by all that knew him.

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Major Conventions throughout Europe

PEOPLE

GUS and BETTY BELL operated "Betty's Fudge Kitchen" at the Home and Garden Show in Ft. Worth just recently.

THE WILLETTYS, balancing and rola bola juggling, worked the Feb. 15-16 Indio (Calif) Date Festival.

TOMMY BENTLEY, CHUCK CLANCY, VIRGINIA LEE FENTON, HERTA and JOHN CUNEO, BILL and JAN BIGGERSTAFF, all visited Circus Vargas in Hollywood, Calif.

THE JOLLY JOVERS have replaced magician PAUL FIDDLER at Las Vegas.

THE CHINESE ACROBATS have been signed for an upcoming Los Angeles engagement with the Emmett Kelly, Jr. Circus.

MILTON BERLE along with WALTER MATTHAU, JACK LEMMON, LUCILLE BALL, DICK VAN PATEN, RUTH BUZZI and CARL BALLANTINE will be featured in an upcoming Home Box Office special called "Celebrity Magic Show".

JOHN JENACK recently produced a circus of students to raise funds for the purchase of circus equipment for elementary and middle school programs.

MANZINI will be featured at the Aquarama Show in Montreal (Mar. 26-Apr. 4), booked by TIBOR ALEXANDER. After that he will start his Police sponsored dates with his new "Manzini Magic Thrill Circus."

ROGER BIDDICK, BILL BRANDENBERGER, CHUCK and LORI CRAW, MIKE HEBEBRAND, KELLY HARDIN, SCOTT LIHME, TONY and SUSIE MEDLEY, MAGGIE SLATER, JIM STELLAR and WARREN WOOD, all of the Great American Youth Circus, visit-

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ed Circus Vargas during the show's Riverside, Calif., engagement.

DAVE "Skinhead" LEWIS clowned and performed his magic at the Annual Blue & Gold Banquet for the Cub Scouts of American in Garden City, Mich., on Feb. 17th.

KEN BROOKE, noted English magician, has been added to the list of talent set for the annual Las Vegas Magic Seminar (Mar. 26-29) which is to be held at the Aladdin Resort Hotel, with special guests SIEGFRIED & ROY.

JO JO JINGLES, the Ft. Worth, Texas, Clown holds the national record for blowing things up, tying and twisting 217 balloon animals an hour. The record was set in 1973.

JOSEPH C. RETTINGER, of Phoenix, Ariz., had as his guests at Circus Vargas: Mrs. BUCK JONES, Mr. NICHOLS S. FIRFIRES and his wife MAXINE (daughter of Buck Jones), Mr. and Mrs. MONTIE MONTANA, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. MONTIE MONTANA, Jr., (owner of the Buffalo Bill Wild West Shows).

PERCY TURNER, former dog and pony show owner) celebrated a birthday last month, with many friends stopping by to enjoy the party. Percy is in the sign painting business in San Diego these days.

SUGAR & SPICE, aerial cradle act, has been working winter dates with the Funs-A-Poppin Circus for BETTY WENDANY.



REPORT

DAMASCUS TEMPLE SHRINE CIRCUS

BY BILL GALLOWAY

The M & M Circus Internationale opened the 1981 season for the Damascus Shrine Temple in Rochester, NY, Feb. 11-15. Extremely good weather brought out excellent crowds for the ten performance stand.

Because of the timing of the date, many circus performers visited on their way to other dates. Visitors included: James M. Cole, Dorian Blake, Billy Martin, the Lang Family, Antar Wazzan and family, the Van Buskirks, Bill Vaughn, John MacKay, Sabu and circus fans Mr. and Mrs. Frank Howard.

Show Line-up: Opening spec "Circus Days" with all performers; Damascus Temple Shrine Units; Harry Thomas, tigers; Mr. Sensation, Billy Barton; Killer Willard, boxing kangaroo,

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(Fossetts); Display with juggling on unicycle on a table by Don Philips & Co., The Laddies, unsupported ladders, Miss Diana (Philips) bicycles; Teeterboard Acro-balancing by Walt and Wendy (Patterson); Clowns and Army gag; Chimps, Miss Christina (Fossett); Display with Susan's Royal Afghans (Davide and Sue Zoppe), Miss Trudy's Canines (Strong); Clowns with the Hot Dog machine; Aerial Display featuring Miss Lou Ann Jacobs.

After intermission came: The Flying Lantons on trapeze; Display with Hand Balancing by Mr. Bell (Walt Patterson), and hand balancing by the Kents (Clayton); Clowns and Pie Shop; Gorilla Parody, Irene, Tonga & Co. (Fossetts); Display with whip cracking and rope spinning by The Claytons and Alonzo (Pancho Magana) Johnny Laddie and the Rhesus Monkey Revue; (Zoppe); Shrine Circus Elephants presented by Roman and Jean Schmitt; The Quasars (Bill and Trudy Strong).

The staff included: Mrs. Grace McIntosh and Charles Marine, producers; James Douglass, performance director; Al Dawley, announcer; Bill "Boom Boom" Browning, musical director; Leo Coffey, prop boss; Spec designed by Circus Creations of Daytona Beach, Fla. (Jim Douglass).

Clown Alley included: Producing, Vern Woerner, Bobby Davis, Elmo Gibbs, Jack Kane, Rick Legg, Mike Naughton, Buck Nolan and Middy Streeter.

— COLLECTOR'S ITEM —

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REPORT**CIRCUS VARGAS**

BY DON COVINGTON

I had an opportunity to visit Circus Vargas again during their President's Day holiday engagement at the Hollywood Bowl and was delighted to see several notable improvements since the San Diego dates last month.

First, and certainly most impressive, is the gorgeous new wardrobe. Cliff Vargas has engaged Millie Ward and some talented Las Vegas costumers to create spectacular new costumes and effects.

The mid-show spec which seemed slow and disorganized earlier in the season, now comes together beautifully thanks to some careful attention to timing and the breath-taking wardrobe. All new sequined elephant blankets, new horse trappings and costumes dazzle the eye and fill the tent with magic. Giant feather head pieces for the show girls compliment the bull's new trappings.

While equestrians fill the three rings, the elephants troop out and the girls who had been riding the beasts have just enough time to hop

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off, change costumes and reappear at the end of the spec to escort the pure white horse "General Vargas" into the center ring and to spotlight the slide for life from the peak of the top across all three rings.

As important as the new wardrobe in spec and in the Rex Williams elephant act is, a dramatic increase in big top lighting, ten spots (6 on the front side and 4 on the back side) now light the 3 rings, and new accent lights are used throughout. Most impressive of these is a set of flashing follow or chase lights that completely cover the center ring during the climax of the spec. The effect is dazzling.

Steve Carroll's windjammers have adjusted their music somewhat to highlight acts, but could still use more traditional circus music, in my opinion.

The 1981 Circus Vargas is getting better daily. I envy those who'll be seeing it later in the season.

SPECIAL**TEXAS CLOWN NOTES**

Twenty clowns from the Texas Mid-Cities Clown Alley No. 85, worked the Kiddie Corral at the annual spring "Home and Garden Show" at the Tarrant County Convention Center in Ft. Worth, Feb. 20-22.

Clowns included: Rosalie, Donald and Lois Perryman, Van and Bil Pinney, Susan Corona, Dottie Yates, Lanea Ramos, Charles Royce Alphin, Nita Buckley, James Decker, Juanita and Alvin Holdcraft, Jo Jo Jingles, Robert Riggle, Lisa Allison, Annetta and Michelle Moerbe, Carol Hill, James Ballew and Willis Garland.

PEOPLE

HARRY ALBACKER, magician, was the subject of a special article appearing in the Pittsburgh, Pa. Press on Feb. 24th.

WILLIAM RAYNOR has been appointed Vice President of Tour Development for Circus World Park in Florida.

JIM and JUDY GREENE (Chiron) have relocated in Orlando, Fla. where friends can now reach them at: 5312 Old Cheney Highway. Phone: 305-282-5065.

VIRGINIA LEE FENTON and CHUCK GRIMES, musicians, are with the Emmett Kelly, Jr. Circus which is playing dates in Arizona.

ANNETTE LITTLE, owner of the "Here Come the Clowns" shop in San Diego, sells paintings and ceramic clown figures, as well as a cook book of circus recipes.

JONNY RIVERS will be presenting his Incredible Hi-Diving Aqua Mules in Chandler Arizona Folley Park, Mar. 20-22, and at the Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena, Apr. 7-19, their first dates since appearing on the "That's Incredible" show on Feb. 16th.

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REPORT

COLE ALL STAR TV CIRCUS

BY BILL GALLOWAY

The 43rd annual tour of the Cole All Star TV Circus marked the 64th year in circus business for owner James M. Cole.

On Monday, Feb. 2, the circus played in Le Roy, NY, at the high school. Extremely cold and windy weather caused the attendance to be down. Those that were there appreciated the show, as evidenced by their response to the performance. As it was Boy Scout Week, Mr. Cole made a special announcement acknowledging the presence of the Cub Scouts at the show.

The show line-up was: Welcome, Big Head Walk Around; Miss Victoria (Vickie Lang) web; Silly Sailors (Lang Kids), comedy knock about; Dorian Blake and Janice, illusions; Jar-go by the Lang family; Billy Martin, rola bola.

After intermission came: Dorian Blake and Janice, illusions; Mongo-Bongo & Co., gorilla parody (Billy Martin and Vickie Lang); Juggling by Bobbi-Jane Duo (Langs); Omar, spinning plates and the Lang Family, teeterboard.

The staff consisted of: Owner-Manager, James M. Cole; Announcer, Billy Martin, and Concessions, Larry and Gary Sheffield.

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MAGIC LIMITED - LLOYD E. JONES - 4064 39TH AVE., OAKLAND, CA. 94619

BY LLOYD E. JONES

The prestigious Academy of Magical Arts and Sciences Dinner set for Mar. 29th, at the Beverly-Wilshire Hotel, will again, for 12 of its 13 years, have Bob Barker as the MC. Expected to attend will be Marco the Magi, David and Seth of the Le Grande David Show and a host of their troupe. Also coming are Gene Gordon, Harry Lorayne, Gerrie Larsen Jaffe, Suzy Wandas Bennett, Ken Brooke, Jane Thurston Shepard, many of whom I am sure will be receiving coveted awards.

Nominees for Lecturer of the Year are: Mike Ammar, Harry Anderson, John Cornelius, Patrick Page and Karrell Fox.

For Close-Up Magic the nominees are: Harry Anderson, Darly, Bob Jardine, Jules Lenier and Danny Rouzer.

Stage Magician: Harry and Leslie Anderson, Jonathan Neal Brown, Mike Caveney, Billy McComb and Larry Wilson.

Visiting Magician: Mike Ammar, Jerry Andrus, Ger Copper, Martin Nash, and Terry Seabrooke

Choices are decided by votes of the membership while Fellowships are bestowed by the Board of Directors. It is an honor just to be

ATTENTION

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I am returning to the east coast in April. I have vast medical and husbandry knowledge of all primates. 20 yrs. experience training chimps and building props for circus routines.

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Write:

JIM KELLY

542 D. St.

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nominated or considered for one of these awards.

The evening will include a show with surprise performers, a no-host cocktail hour and a prime rib dinner. Tickets are \$5.00 each and choice seats still remain. Only 800 people can be accommodated.

Old-timer Johnny Platt will be the honored guest at a champagne reception at the Magic Castle on March 29th.

Bob Emerico received a front page photo and inside three column spread in the Healdsburg (Calif) Tribune on Feb. 13th, for his third visit to the local school.

Report

OLD WAGONS ARRIVE IN FLORIDA

Two famous, historical wagons from the original Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus arrived at Circus World Park in Florida at 12:05 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 12th, after a 4,000 mile cross-country journey that originated in California.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus World theme park are, in essence, returning to their original owners.

Wagon No. 88, the largest of the two circus monuments is 20 ft long and weighs nearly 5 tons, empty. The wagon, tremendous in size, was used to haul wardrobe trunks. Once unloaded, the wagon was transformed into a dressing room for the all-time circus great wild



The wagons are the final two original vehicles that represented this historic traveling circus . . . a long remembered tradition in America. Purchased from the president of Show Ring Corp., Jerry Booker, the deal was arranged by vice president of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Chappie Fox, along with Circus World president, James Murphy.

Fox, a long-time friend of Booker, inspected the wagons while visiting Booker at his home in Hillsborough, Calif., in Aug. 1980. Recognized throughout the world as a circus historian and authority, Fox readily acknowledged the safekeeping and preservation of these glorious wagons from the turn-of-the-century. During the 1930's, Ringling owned the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus . . . original proprietors of the majestic and multi-purpose wagons. The wagons, now being placed in the possession of

animal performer, Clyde Beatty.

Wagon No. 54, considered the older of the two wagons, was the original cookhouse water wagon. Constructed on mainly wood, the wagon housed a steel rectangular water tank securely inside its wooden body.

According to Fox, these wagons represent the massive type of construction that was utilized by the big railroad circuses during the times of "one-day, one-city" performances. The wagons were heavily loaded and required as many as 6 to 8 horse teams to move them on and off the circus lots.

Circus World president James Murphy has committed to restoring the wagons to their original state by early summer. The wagons will be displayed at the circus theme park, Circus World.

PEOPLE

BILLY BARTON held an autograph party at McCurdy's Dept. Store in Rochester, NY, on Feb. 16th, where he spent two hours signing copies of his book "Past Murder Imperfect".

LARRY VAKSMAN, juggling unicyclist, was pictured in an AP photo release which was released this past month.

HOWARD M. WICKSTROM wants to contact a female acrobat and/or contortionist. Write him at: 1418 North 27th, Kansas City, Kans.



BILLY BARTON

DATELINE: Greencastle, Pa., Feb. 25 - Home at last and more than just home **BACK** in the USA! Believe me, it will take an Act of Congress to get **ME** out of the USA again (at least as a performer) and it will take **FAR** more than **THAT** to ever get me back into another Latin American country.

As everyone knows I entered Mexico with Circus Odyssey. What you don't know is that I came out through the offices of Circo Atayde and a man they had stationed at the border who spirited me across as a Turista; plus the kind intervention of the **LE MOINE** Troupe who caught up with me enroute and led me into Matamoris and **BACK** into the good old USA where I **INDEED** kissed the ground when I got back (and I have witnesses).

Each person who went to Mexico has his own story to tell and I am sure that in time each story will be told. You can rest assured each story is true. We went through hell getting there, suffered untold mental anguish during our sojourn there, and worried to death about getting back out once we started our homeward trek.

I closed a day earlier than the time on the contract, but that closing was written into the contract as I had a previous commitment in Rochester with **GRACIE McINTOSH** (which I fully intended to keep and did keep). **BUCKY STEELE** left Mexico two days after he arrived, but I'll leave Bucky to tell his own story.

Owing to losing a week (through no fault of our own) the remaining acts were talked into staying an extra five days, which, of course, was up to the individual to decide - all, that is, except **SATANI** who decided not to stay but, as I said, each person has his own story to tell and in due time I am certain Satani will tell his. Besides, I wasn't there when he left and have only second-hand information. Until such time as I talk to Satani personally I will let that incident slide.

The show was held up at the border for a week - for reasons that were valid, for reasons that were not; but then almost all acts find

themselves held up at the border for a number of days.

It happened for those acts crossing for Atayde (Lou Ann Jacobs, Pancho, The Pirates, The Zoppes, Don Young, the Le Moines and Irving Hall. It also happened in Laredo to the Bauers, the Paulsons, and others entering Mexico to play a fair date), so of itself this is not unusual. The difference is that those acts, when they cross, have in their possession all the necessary papers - American and Mexican, proper working papers with photographs, equipment papers, etc. and these papers remain on the person all the time he is in the country. In our case we entered with Tourist Visas and **NEVER** did have on our person or in our possession proper working papers. On top of that our Tourist Visas were taken from us in Mexico City, ostensibly to be traded for working papers and we remained then **WITHOUT** papers.

Now, as told to us by the American Embassy (and they should know as it is their job to know) any American wandering around Mexico must have, in addition to his Passport, some sort of papers. This is a **LAW**. Consequently we took a chance going anywhere without them but we had no choice.

I left Mexico City with a Xerox copy of my original tourist visa (hardly legible) and some sort of a letter (also xerox) which when **MIDDY STREETER** showed them to the authorities at the airport He was given a good deal of trouble about (a man of importance with a kind heart finally let him leave). The fact is the papers were not proper for someone leaving **ALONE** and without a member of Televis at the border to handle the details. . . which is why I retained mine and will continue to retain them as proof of my statements and also why I scooted across like any other American tourist in Matamoris that day.

Well, I'm not going to get on the soapbox about my Mexico experience. I have been weeks without a column and I know my readers are anxious to know what's going on in the business and so, after I mark a few warnings

about Mexico to the industry, I will get on with my normal columnizing.

First of all, anybody contemplating going to Mexico for ANYBODY, must make sure he has all his proper papers BEFORE he crosses the border. To be on the safe side make Xerox copies of ALL papers. DON'T, I repeat Don't let anybody take your papers from you, and don't ever relinquish your passport. Just don't; Watch out for ALL Mexican cops, they're the true BANDIDOS. Don't ever ask a cop for directions. You'll end up getting ripped off. I did to the tune of \$2000 pesos (about \$100) but that is another long story.

Don't believe that Mexico is cheap. It is NOT! Inflation has hit there as it has everywhere else. Decent gas cost \$1.20 a gallon, gas you can run an American car on. The roads are, for the most part, TERRIBLE. You can bury a Volkswagen in the holes in the street in Reynosa, for example.

Learn to read Spanish - enough to get over the roads. Road signs in cities are practically non-existent - it is a simple matter to get lost, and watch the drivers - they're the most homicidal in the world. Make sure you have Mexican insurance and make sure you are covered for extra days and whatever you do don't drive in Mexico City. It's a lethal activity. Watch the gas stations along the highways - some are real rip-offs and be prepared to bribe your way through the checkpoints. You can do anything in Mexico with a bribe. Watch the animals along the highways and try to avoid driving at night. Animals are all over the place and if you hit one and stop you'll find yourself in mucho hot water - just go like hell and forget it. Our bandleader BILL FISHER got struck in the leg by a motorist in Mexico City who hollered in Spanish for Bill to get out of the way. Accidents and people being struck by cars are so commonplace it becomes a bore. Don't expect logic or common sense, either; one American performer (Don Young I think) got arrested for stopping at a green light to

keep from hitting a pedestrian!

Mexico City is over-polluted and over-populated. Getting on and off public conveyances can be suicidal. They crowd like cattle and trample each other so don't expect them to be polite to you. Two hours in Mexico City and you'll learn to be as rude as they are. You must if you want to survive.

On the plus side, much of Mexico City is very old-world and beautiful and the people, individually, are nice and friendly. The fruit is delicious and so are the baked goods. Restaurants are hit and miss and most of your food is served cold, especially potatoes and vegetables. We found a luxurious hotel and very reasonable (even if it did turn out to be a high class operation for a rather dubious profession) but finding that was due to the genius of STANLEY FRIEDBERG who speaks Spanish and who is far more clever than any of us suspected!

The Metro is clean and fast (and crowded) and cheap, and the trolley cars are fun (for awhile anyway) and ramshackle (all dents and broken windows and headlights smashed) and cost only about a penny to ride - when you can get on them. Even the Metro costs only a few pennies. On these you will find entertainers and vendors popping off and on and even the streets abound with acrobats, perch pole artists, fire eaters and whathaveyou.

At least eight circuses were in operation in Mexico City - a city whose population tops 15 million - believe it or not - and I have since learned it is the largest city in the world. It is also the highest, I think, nearly 8000 ft. and breathing ain't easy. All of the circuses were doing good business and someone told me there are at least 250 circuses in Mexico, the majority of them small family shows but every one, somehow, manages to eke out a living.

The two major circuses, of course, were Atayde and Odyssey, and of them all, Odyssey was certainly doing the best business, because we had full houses and nearly full matinees even during the week. On weekends we had nothing but straw houses with thousands turned away and scalpers on the outside selling tickets at \$20.00 per. Main seats in our European six pole top were going for about \$8.00, and always filled. One Sunday they had to call out the cops because fights to get into the show erupted on the midway. I never recalled seeing people fighting to get in to a show over here!

Odyssey was brought into Mexico by Televisa,

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a powerful sponsor indeed and of course the airwaves were inundated with Odyssey commercials. The fact remains, however, that it was the performance and word of mouth that brought the crowds, because the show was good, and it was American. . .and. . .American acts are something special in Mexico.

Odyssey program for the run, ran as follows: Spec, Lilliana, Billy Barton, Rex Young's Clown Duck Hunt; Cimse's Russian Wolfhounds; The Venturas, cradle; Jackie's chimps, the Gutis Family; Rex Young's clown fire house; Joselito; Intermission;

Second half kicked off with the Flying Lar-Rays, Dion and Beverly, Rex Young's Comedy Cannon, Loreli, single trapeze, Althoff's Bears, Spiderman, Satani Demon, Finale. Bucky Steele played the first two days before giving up the ghost and returning state-side. Clowns included Dion and Beverly, Bobby Davis, Rex and Sandy Young. Ringmaster was Middy Streeter, plus a Spanish ringmaster; band was under the direction of Bill Fisher with Stanley at the hammond organ. They used about six men. The band was excellent. The audiences were marvelous. Everybody was a big hit. The Mexicans love their circus.

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PEOPLE

PETE MUSTARD, clown artist in San Diego, now has over 500 original paintings of clowns in his home. Circus clowns regularly visit him to see the paintings, some of which are displayed at the Children's Hospital in Orange, Calif.

BOB EMERICO, DEL JONES and **WALLY LEE & Co.**, were featured acts at the annual Oakland (Calif) Magic Circle Banquet in Feb. **BILL WILLIAMS** served as the show's MC.

JIMMY BRISCOE, former Ringling-Barnum clown, is featured in the film "Under the Rainbow" He also did the stunt work in this film for star **BILLY BARTY**.

Looks like I got on my soapbox after all and have run out of space. So be it. Will close out this column and begin next week's so I can make up for lost time and will see you down the road, luvs - **AMERICAN ROADS** that is!

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

is planning a celebration of old time American tent shows. We are interested in hearing from persons who have performed or lectured with toby, rep, tab, medicine, minstrel, Tom and other travelling shows (other than circuses) along with Chatauquas. We are researching the subject for our achives and for a possible presentation on the national mall in Washington, D. C.

Please write:

Steven Zeitlin, Folklore Program
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D. C. 20560

Review

THE MAGIC OF DAVID COPPERFIELD

BY BILL BIRCHFIELD

(David Copperfield's show was appearing at Caesars Tahoe Hotel and Casino, Parkinson/Hollywood L&D Productions).

Nothing does magicians more harm than a bad magician. On the other hand nothing does magicians more benefit than a good magician. Magicians of the world rejoice, for Caesars at So. Shore Lake Tahoe, Nevada, is now featuring in the Cascade Showroom one of the best magic shows in the history of the art.

Produced by Bob Parkinson and David Copperfield, starring and directed by David Copperfield, the 90 minute stage extravaganza features the best of David's live and network television appearances.

The performance I saw was a Sunday matinee with a mixed family audience of about 700. Considering a very late winter (No skiing so there are few tourists) this was a very good crowd. Friends there told me he was outdrawing other main room shows at the entertainment mecca.

The show began with a short announcement introducing David. The main house curtain opened to reveal David being driven on stage on the hood of a glistening 1981 red Ferrari. He was decked out in an all white suit. This provided quite a contrast on an all black stage.

Illusion No. 1 is an original illusion called the Tower which is a two story prop resembling a chrome-plated scaffold. The illusion combined arm stretching, a production of two girls, a vanish of the magician and an invisible reproduction of David in the middle of the room. It was performed lightning fast. A fast-paced, attention getter opening.

Next David presents an invisible deck routine using a spectator from the audience. David's on stage personality is excellent. He comes across as a very humble young man who is trying to provide the best show he possibly can, which is exactly the case.

Now comes a short play called "The Jewel Thief". These plays have become David's trademark. Short one act plays with a plot and a shocking magical finish.

During The Jewel Thief several illusions occur. The plot is this: The thief hides in an expensive jewelry store (ala Tiffany's) by magic the magical thief makes millions of dollars

of priceless jewels disappear. To avoid being apprehended the thief transforms himself into a one dimensional display piece.

The Jewel Thief incorporates several set pieces all beautifully designed and presented. The scenery is that of a metropolitan sky line complete with lighted windows and clouds, Absolutely beautiful!

Now comes a 1950's dance number. Six costumed dancers in a number staged by choreographer Steve Merritt. David enters portraying a "greaser" type. He becomes involved in a contest for the affections of the ladies. The "other man" tries to impress the ladies with his dancing. David counters with his magic. Finally David wins by making the whole radio disappear. This is a delightful scene adding musical comedy at a time in the program where it is most appreciated.

In order to give time to set the stage David performs a routine called the Room Key. Again using an assistant from the audience. David amazes the crowd by making a correct prediction of a room key number. This allows David to show his true self. His delivery is enthusiastic, and never, never risqué. Very smart thinking.

The next illusions are presented dramatically to Gershwin's "American in Paris".

This scene features the dancing cane routine and an original levitation of a girl assistant. The levitation is unusual in that the full stage is exposed at one point to show there are no means of support whatsoever.

David now presents a "Sucker Gag" involving some popular and unpopular record albums and once again he is helped from the audience. The audience thinks he has made a serious mistake in the production of which album the spectator has chosen only to find they have been fooled once again.

Now comes one of Magician Copperfield's most mystifying and popular routines - the Dancing Hank/Zombie done to Sinatra's "All the Way". The scene is that of a cocktail lounge. An argument with a girl friend forces David to take solace by performing magic with his table napkin. The routine is a real crowd pleaser and one of David's best. The applause is loud and long.

As a change of pace the master magician introduces his girl singer Phyllis Kelly. She is an old fashioned belter! She sings New York, New York, I know I'll never love this way again and assisted by two boy dancers, a rou-

sing finish with the theme from Fame. She is an excellent singer and she looks great. This is a terrific break for her. Remember that name Phyllis Kelly.

Another of my famous routines is next. An orange, lemon, egg and canary. The canary is made to vanish which reappears inside the egg, which is inside the lemon, which is inside a juicy orange. A real show stopper. The canary is the only animal used in the show.

Presented at this point is a routine called 'The Attic', again magic with a plot. It goes like this . . . David, while going through his old magic props remembers a childhood sweet-heart. In his "imagination" she appears to him. They play some childhood games including hide-and-seek, the play finishes with the girl vanishing from under a sheet, while sitting in a chair that is on a table. An old classic with fresh new style.

Introductions now. David introduces his dancers/assistants. He also introduced several show people playing in the area who were in the audience.

The "Private Eye" is next. This magic-play features several illusions: vanishes, reappearances and transformations. There are several scene changes throughout this complex series of illusions. Extraordinary magic presented as only Copperfield can!

Now a cute routine called "Let's Burn A Deal" It's a spoof of the game show "Let's Make a Deal". David portrays the host, using a man from the audience, the burned and restored bill is presented in a unique fashion.

For the Finale, the red \$50,000, 2700 pound red Ferrari is driven on stage. It is then covered with a satin sheet. Copperfield makes the command, the car levitates! Assistants with flags and flag poles show proof no gimmackry is taking place. The Ferrari floats higher Copperfield jumps, yanks the sheet away, the car is gone. The audience cheers, the curtain falls, the house lights come up, the audience is left mystified, astounded and amazed.

David Copperfield is a superb showman. He looks great. No "T" shirts on this guy. His basic costume is a black velvet jacket with an open collar. His material is fresh and never the least suggestive.

Comment on the music. The music at Lake Tahoe was not an assortment of records spliced together. Much of the music sounded to be recorded specifically for the act in a recording studio. Probably for the network

specials. David's use of Sinatra's recording was excellent. Sinatra cuts were used several times throughout the show.

The "Rags" were beautiful. Several mammoth chiffons and mylar curtains were hung. Two lighted portals and several electrified set pieces, as well as many individual scenes were hung on the hug stage.

David told me that every baton on the stage was being used. Four semi trailers were needed to truck the show in from L.A. It took a week to put the show in. In the middle of David's 13 week appearance Frank Sinatra did a week engagement. The Sinatra people decided not to use any of the Copperfield stuff, so out it went for a week and then it was put back again, overnight.

Ticket prices for the show are \$8.00 for adults and \$4.50 for kids. Rinks, soft or hard, are extra.

Don Wayne deserves credit for helping David design those incredible props and to John Goughan who helped build them. Gary Bormat helped write the magic plays. Costumes were designed by Herb Kaluger, Kathy Brunka and Rudy Pickering.

Lighting was designed by Chip Largeman, a seasoned lighting designer. But I felt this must have been Chip's first job for magic. The show is much too dark.

If the illusions are designed to work on a fully lighted stage, why aren't they? Darkness is suspicious and unwarranted suspicion is something a magician does not need. The attic scene was much too dark. I feel 70% of the effect of the vanish was lost and why a pin spot was used on David throughout the show just doesn't make sense.

The dancers/assistants are: R. David Robinson, Monica Bryant, David Caley, Sioux Lewellyn, Robbin McDowell, Sarah Miles and Tom Stoehr.

This is without a doubt the best magic show presented in years. Hats off to David Copperfield. Keep up the good work.

PEOPLE

SENIOR WENCES, popular ventriloquist, is appearing in a show in San Juan.

JEFF McBRIDE, magician, is featured at the Q. E. in Montreal these days.