

BACK YARD

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THE CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN!

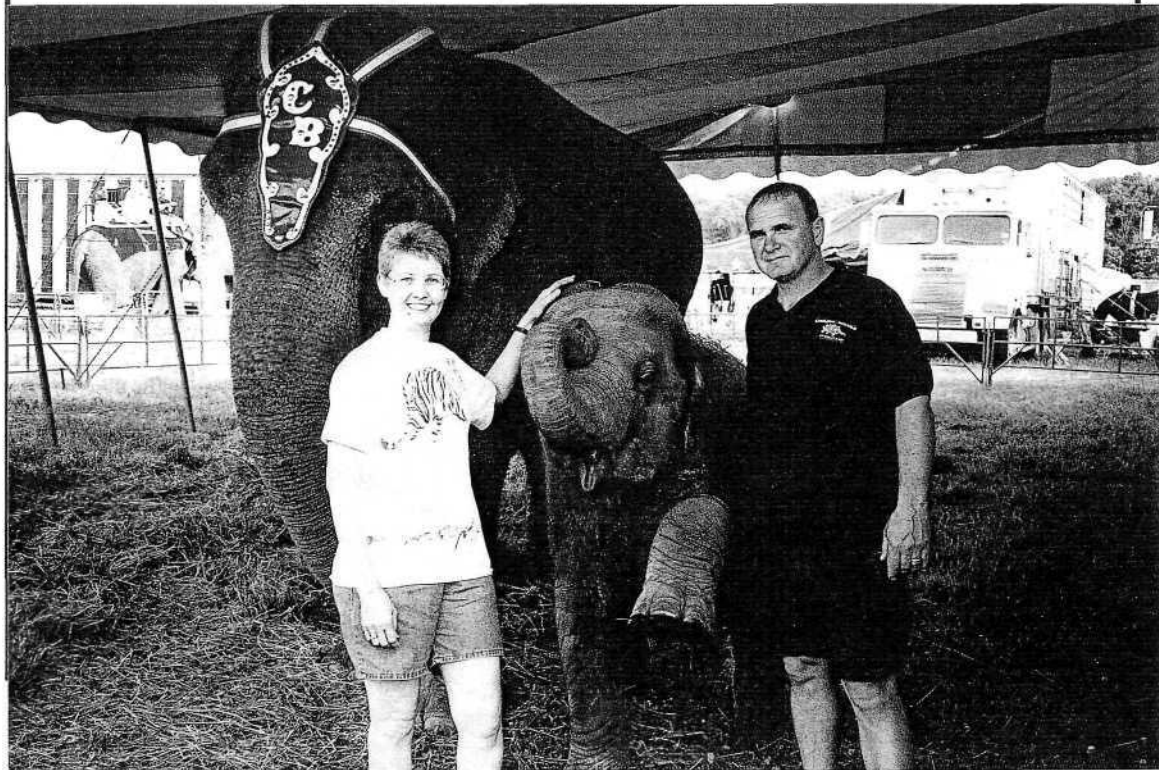
By Barbara Brooks

On an early summer morning in June, The Carson and Barnes Circus came to Wooster, Ohio for two shows at the Wayne County Fairgrounds. My husband, Ned, Kiki, our College of Wooster host daughter, from Kenya, and I got up at 6:00 AM to be sure that we were one of the first patrons to see the circus' arrival. There were several other excited fans anxiously awaiting the appearance of the first semi truck with the circus insignia painted on the side announcing its arrival in town.

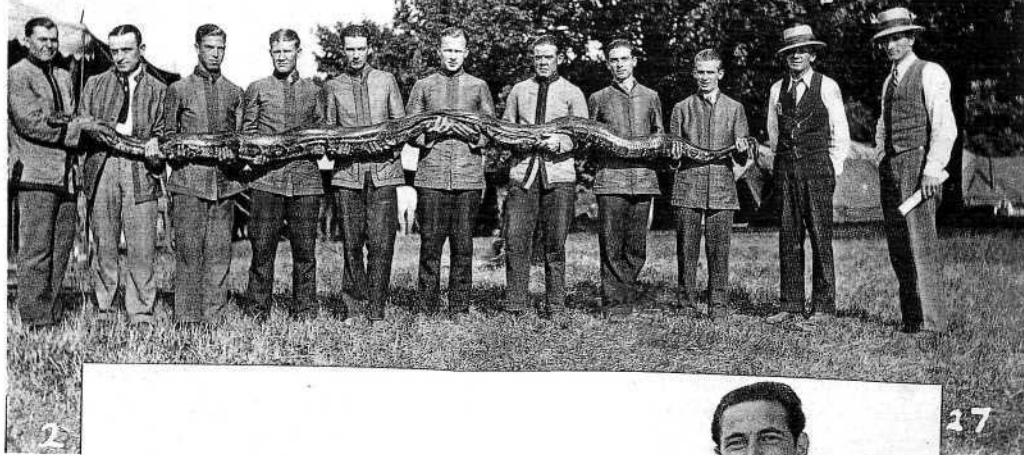
Not only were we one of the first to arrive, we followed the lead semi truck onto the fairgrounds. It had been a rainy few days before circus day and

one of the semi trucks carrying literally a ton of elephants immediately became mired in the squishy, soft earth. No problem for this group as it travels with its own mobile, gray towing equipment, lovingly known as Bunny, Susie and Minny, three members in the herd of Carson & Barnes elephants. They were quickly hitched and hooked up to the truck and with a few tugs had it pulled out of the mud and on its way to the other side of the fairgrounds. As this was going on, other vehicles containing props, costumes and performers were streaming into the parking area. A unique pink and white semi truck caught my eye and I knew that something special was inside.

(Continued Pg. 4)



Sparks
1927



Jam Perz



JOHNNY MARIETTA 1913-2000

Remarks by Paul Ingrassia

I was honored to be asked to speak at my old friend's funeral by his wife Helen and her family. I deeply appreciated that opportunity. It gave me one last chance to be a part of John's life. I had met him forty years ago at a circus event. He fascinated me then and has every day I knew him. He was one of three guys who really glued me to the hobby of chasing shows and showthings. The other two, like John, were world class characters, Whitey Savage and Benny Kronberger. Anyone who remembers these guys will agree that all three were one of a kind!

Besides his absolute abiding interest and concern for his family, John had three great interests in life. They were Trains, making deals and the circus. I can't really say which was the dominant interest. At different times he was wrapped up in all three.

As a dealer of anything tradable, collectible or salable, he did thousands of deals. Often he had some pretty peculiar products; five hundred one armed jackets, a hundred left handed pistol holders or a truck load of loose safety pins. If he got beat on the deal, he would make it good for laughs and thus get some of his money back that way. He was an expert on all kinds of products and in truth, often made a lot of money with that knowledge. He got me a fifty year old ten cent slot machine at what I felt was a good price. Later he told me he had sold all the old dimes left in the thing for more than I gave him for the machine. He often dealt in calliopes, band organs and popcorn wagons. I have known him to sell these kinds of artifacts for large profits after he did much of the restoration himself. His real love was trains and train equipment. He had a complete five car, full sized train in his backyard in Pittsburg, Kansas. It was a mile from any track and he had to sled it in and build the tracks to set it on. The clubcar on that train was the sight of some of the best circus parties I have ever attended and he often entertained showfolks and friends who were coming thru town in it. One of the baggage cars was filled with circus and rail

artifacts. He had five sheds and buildings filled with all kinds of stuff, lots of circus, railroad, old time collectibles. During the last few months of his life, when he knew he was dying of cancer, he just kept collecting railroad crossing signals. Some of these signals were so large that a fork lift was needed to load them on a truck to get back to his home. The day I left his house after his funeral, they were all standing in his back yard like soldiers standing at attention. When I asked his son what they intended to do with all those signals, he said, "...just leave them there, they remind me of Pa." Smart kid!

John and Charlie Smith, the longtime trainmaster of RBBB, were great pals. Charlie told me that John's knowledge of where used train equipment was laying around somewhere in America, often helped the show. The Ringling organization was very nice to John and often gave him half a car to travel with the show during those times he wanted to play circus. Gunther Gebel Williams saw John around the show so much that he finally started calling him "Vacation" as that was about the only thing he figured John did. John loved traveling with the show and loved visiting with the working guys. Sal Condido (props) was a particularly good friend. Axel Gautier was also very fond of John as was Keith Green. There were lovely flowers at John's funeral from the Greatest Show on Earth.

I could write a book about John but I'll close this with the following experience: We were at a Circus Fans convention in Pasadena, California about fifteen years ago. The Vargas Show was the convention circus and Cliff went out of his way to see to it that everything was really first class. John told Cliff that he enjoyed the show so much that he was going to put Cliff... "in his will." Cliff, himself a hell of a character, took John seriously as he loved the accolades of his fans. At the banquet that night, Cliff was the main speaker and with tears in his eyes he started his remarks by saying that he was deeply honored that a fan loved his show so much that he was going to put Cliff in his will and leave him money when he died. (See Page 6)

The Circus Came To Town.....

The first exotic animal I saw was a petite Siamese cat who climbed out of the passenger side of a semi and perched himself on the rearview mirror. He sniffed the air checking out his temporary territory. I swear I saw a contented cat-grin as he surveyed the immediate area all the while watching the other familiar trucks and vans arrive.

Everywhere I turned there was a flurry of activity with people unloading circus gear, feeding and offering water to the animals, setting up concession stands, arranging animals in the petting zoo, and spinning cotton candy.

I was drawn back to the pink and white stripped semi and was even more curious about what could be inside with the additional appearance of a pink and blue awning. I walked over to the semi to find the newest member of the Carson and Barnes Circus standing there with what I presumed was her mother. She was Jennie, an almost two-year-old Asian baby elephant. What a charmer she was! The older elephant protectively put her trunk around Jennie's small head and fed her hay with her trunk. It was a delight to see that just like in the wild, these herd animals have all of their maternal needs met by other female elephants when Mom is not around. As I learned later, the adult elephant is actually Jennie's auntie. Her Mom, 30-years-old, Isa, was back home near Hugo, Oklahoma at the breeding farm and may be expecting another little Carson & Barnes star. Jennie proved to be the shining star of this circus performance and received many ooooooh's and aaaaaah's during her moment in the spotlight in center ring.

I wanted to meet and talk to Tim Frisco, Animal Care Director and trainer of Jennie, so I decided to ask the first circus person I ran into where I could find him. I selected the right person to ask as it turned out to be Tim's wife, Patty Frisco. She said that I could stop by after the first show to talk to him. Tim was quite gracious and invited me to meet little Jennie. Upon meeting her, Jennie placed her small trunk in my hands and sniffed my scent. I

guess I passed inspection because she posed for several pictures. Tim gave her a gentle command and she lifted her foot; the professional pose of a true star and she even appeared to smile at the camera.

Tent rope stakes were pounded and drilled into the ground and then the huge red and white circus tent was laid out flat. At an appointed time, all of the hired roadies pulled the canvas to its full extension in preparation to be raised. Susie, the elephant, was once more called upon to use her imposing strength to help pull the tent into place. One-two-three..pull!! The flat canvas was drawn into a small pyramid with many feet still laying on the ground. Again, one-two-three..pull!! Susie was doing her job well and after four hours of hard teamwork, the circus tent was standing. I walked inside and was dazzled by a dark blue star-splashed sky canopy. Toward one end of the tent, Manuel and Maritza were making a final check on their "Death Defying Double Wheels of Destiny," a popcorn wagon was being pulled by a tractor to its place of prestige at the circus tent entrance and The Flying Cavallinis were making sure that the ropes and trapeze bars were secure and in place.

I walked outside of the tent and was met by Susie and her handler. I greeted them both and Susie responded by sniffing my foot and gently wrapping her trunk around my ankle. I asked her handler if I would be hanging upside down at any moment and he assured me that I would not. He commanded her with a stern, yet gentle, command to "Back up." She immediately let go and backed up. It was an unwritten affirmative response that these animals are respected, and loved.

I was also impressed with two African elephants who were enjoying eating the tender grass shoots and being sprayed down with cool water. One of them had long, white tusks that were as magnificent as those I saw on the wild herds of elephants on the open plains of Kenya and Tanzania.

The unmistakable, intoxicating aroma that can only be called "par fume de tiger" (Continued on Pg. 6)

***** **IMPORTANT MESSAGE** *****

**In a recent Circus Report article about Roberts Bros. Circus,
I was referred to repeatedly as a “trainer.”**

The writer meant no harm.

**However, anyone who knows me knows that I am only
a handler, not a trainer.**

**I want to be the first to make that perfectly clear.
The only animals I can say I trained were three sets
of racing pigs and anyone can do that.**

**A far cry from training an elephant!
This same thing happened to me in 1990,
when I was handling “Barbara” on the Culpepper show.**

**So, writers, I know you are trying to be nice,
but please! I am in no way, shape or form,
an elephant trainer.**

Just wanted to set the record straight.

Ken “Turtle” Benson

P.S. How come nobody ever calls me?

Cell Phone: 1-941-320-9775

P.S.S. Why did I buy the Smokey bullhook?

Because I can!

THE CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN!.....

filled my senses as I rounded the next corner. I stood in front of the tiger and lion transport cages and chuffed (f-f-f-f) a greeting to the tigers. It took a little while for them to realize that I was talking to them, but once they recognized that their familiar communication call was coming from me, I received a warm f-f-f-f for my efforts. The lions do not chuff, but they politely indulged me with a wide open mouth yawn and stretched out their legs and fell back to sleep. Cats just being cats in the warm sunshine.

The final preparations for the circus were being completed so Ned, Kiki and I went home to change clothes, feed my own animals and then return for the 4:00 show.

Back at the circus, and sitting in box seats in the front row, we awaited the music signaling that the circus was about to begin. Our excitement built as the overture was played. A fortunate few local children were chosen to ride the elephants in the introduction parade. The 5-ring circus was a whirl of color and sound right before our eyes as aerialists, poodles, dancers, beautiful Friesian Stallions, trapeze artists, and hula hoop performers moved with precision on cue. I leaned forward in my seat for the much awaited appearance of the tigers and lions. The intro music for the exotic cats' entrance began...no tigers and no lions. The spotlight remained on the entrance cages...the intro music began again...spotlight...no tigers or lions. The third time was a charm and one of the big tigers trotted out to meet the audience. Following him came the other tigers and the lions. The large tiger was more interested in rolling around in the grass and one of them leaned, poised completely off of his pedestal. He was partially seated, but was more intent in batting at the tail of the lion as he ran by than waiting his turn to jump to another platform. No matter that they didn't want to do anything other than just be beautiful...they were magnificent.

All too quickly the circus was over and we were commissioned, "May All Your Days Be Circus

Days!"

Barbara Brooks is Publicist for the Tiger Missing Link Foundation whose mission is through education and conservation of the endangered tiger; and big cat rescue. In addition to the promotional aspect of her work, she loves to have hands-on encounters with the felines and visits and works at the Tiger Missing Link Foundation's sanctuary, Tiger Creek, as often as she can.

You can contact her at Animals367@aol.com or via regular mail: Barbara Brooks, Publicist
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Wooster, Ohio 44691

Phone: 330-264-9495

(Thanks Barbara! Perhaps you could write us an update on **Ron Holiday** and his cats and their new home in Florida.)

JOHNNY MARIETTA.....

There was applause and then a voice in the back of the room hollered... "I hope you're in the top two hundred." Johnny fell on the floor he laughed so hard. Anyone that knew John will miss him. I certainly will.

(Thanks, Paul. If anyone else has memories of John that you would like to share with us, please write.)

Rich Deptula sent this in: Within the next few months, **The Barnum Museum** in Bridgeport will be featured on the History Channel's program, "History's Mysteries," in a segment on circus side show performers. The 107-year-old museum, P.T. Barnum's last gift to his adopted city, will be the historic anchor for the piece.

Producer Arthur Drooker and crew spent a day at the museum filming artifacts on Barnum, General Tom Thumb, the FeeJee Mermaid, Siamese Twins, Chang and Eng and Barnum's first "attraction," Joice Heth, who was purported to be the 161-year-old former nursemaid to George Washington. Air dates will be announced on the History Channel.

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONVENTION-9/6-10.
Bloomington, Illinois!! Be Here!!!

News From Our Circus Friends

Doug Kruest writes "I saw Tommy Hanneford and his show at the Columbus, Ohio Zoo's Water Park, called Wyandot Lake. David and Dania are ringmasters and do their transformations; Adrian Poema does hand balancing. Then came Nellie Hanneford, liberty horses; Raul Castano, clowning; Benito, juggling and Benito's partner, hair hang. This was a free show with admission to the water park and the third of 3 shows Tommy has produced for the Water Park this summer. First was magic, then "Hot Ice" (ice skaters on a plastic rink). Running time, about 45 minutes. Unfortunately, in the eyes of some of us, Dania is not doing her hoop act. Tommy came in for the set up and was still there July 31. The show runs for 3 weeks.

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Larry Crocker writes "I remember Rudy Bundy and one time the Big Show was in Boston and the Shrine honored him and before the opening performance, he was ridden around the track in a beautiful Cadillac roadster. I believe he might have been a potentate of the Shrine in Sarasota. Ed Motta and myself went over to Lincoln, RI August 4th and saw Sterling-Reid set up. Sara Gordon left the show last week to return to school. The show has quite a bit of equipment. They played Springfield in a building last fall, but I was at my daughters in San Antonio at the time. They did very well out in Dartmouth for the two days. I saw Vidbels show August 8 and visited with Mike Snyder. He said he has been with them for 10 years. Time certainly does fly by. The show did very good as usual in Mattapoiset. The next show to come thru will be Roberts Bros. and we'll see them in Berkley soon.

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Kent Ghirard, of Hawaii, says the lady on the horse in the upper left corner of the inside cover of the last issue is **Chita Cristiani**. Folks, if you know the names of people in any of the photos, please let me know. Most of the photos I get have no names on them and sometimes, just a year is written.

Richard Via, of Hawaii, writes "August 1st, Kent and I went to the Farm Fair to see Circo Garcia. I was wonderful! Without question, the star of the

troop, for us, was Jaime Garcia. A perfect MC for Hawaii, very funny, aware, pleasant and a loving father. Yes, this all came through. The show was outdoors in the same arena, but enlarged, that the seals had used last month. According to Garcia, they were only allowed to do 5 acts in each show. Since the second show did not start until 10 PM, we had to leave but as far as we could tell, we only missed the high wire and the gorilla balloon. So, what did we see? First, the oldest son did the space wheel which was a thrill for all of the audience. It is a smaller version than one usually sees, but done well. Next, was hand balancing by a Bulgarian who was also liked by the audience. (There was no program, so they didn't get everyone's name.) The Rugsrats came out to entertain the children. After a short dance, they asked for 6 kids to come on stage, but no one went up, so 8 adults went up to play musical chairs. How can something so simple be so funny and entertaining to an audience? But it was, largely due to Garcia's commentary.

The last two in the game got Poloroid pix with the Rugsrats. The Vitale Duo did an excellent and exciting crossbow act which drew cheers from the audience. Their costumes were rather spectacular. The show closed with the motorcycle globe of death. The oldest son went in first for a bit, then 8-year-old, youngest son went in with a mini-bike. Hawaiian audiences love kid performers, so he did well. To the surprise of us all, Garcia came out on a bike and he and the older son had the 2 bikes in the globe. They came out to a cheering crowd.

For those of you who see many big shows a year, you might now get the joy and fun of Circo Garcia. It is a small family show that was perfect for the Hawaii Farm Fair. I, for one, am grateful that Meadow Gold Dairy, Hawaiian Airlines and a rental car company brought them over. The show is included in the \$2.50 adult admission! You can hardly beat that! We both really enjoyed the show and met with Garcia afterwards to let him know. The music was also good, often Mexican tunes. Announcements were in done in English and Spanish.

RINGLING RED: Colorado Springs-8/16-20; Wichita-8/24-27; Moline, IL-8/31-9/3; Kansas City-9/6-10; Des Moines-9/13-17; Grand Rapids-9/21-24; Indianapolis-9/27-10/1; Detroit-10/5-9; Boston-10/13-21; Huntington, WV-10/26-29; Pittsburgh-11/1-5

RINGLING BLUE: Oakland, CA-8/16-20; San Jose-8/23-27; San Francisco-8/30-9/4; Sacramento-9/6-10; Seattle-9/14-17; Portland-9/21-24; Salt Lake City-9/27-10/1; Denver-10/4-9; Cleveland-10/20-29

"Kaleidoscope": Atlanta, GA-9/6-10/29

Circus Chimera: SedroWolley, WA-8/16-17; Lacey-St. Martins College-8/18-20

Kelly-Miller Circus: Wixom, MI-8/14; Chelsea-8/15; Dearborn Heights-8/16; Durand-8/17; Alma-8/18.

Hanneford Tent Circus: Wyandot Lake, OH-next to Columbus Zoo-thru 8/20.

Carson & Barnes: Wellston, OH-8/15; New Lexington-8/16; Newark-8/17; Yellow Springs, OH-8/18-19; Englewood-8/20; Shelbyville, IN-8/21; N. Vernon-8/22; Madison-8/23; Austin-8/24; Salem-8/25; Jasper-8/26

Vidbel Circus: N. Andover-8/15-16; Lynn-8/22; Reading, MA-8/31.

Circus Historical Society Convention-Bloomington/Normal, Illinois-9/6-9

Roberts Bros Circus: Middleboro, MA-8/15; Norton-8/17; Spencer-8/18; Oxford-8/19

Wenatchee Youth Circus: Shoreline-8/20; Federal Way-8/26-27; Metaline Falls-9/2-3; Chelan County Fair-9/6-7

Berkshire Kids Circus: Pittsfield, MA-8/18-19

Culpepper & Merriweather: Galena, IL-8/16; Platteville, WI-8/17; Verona-8/18; Boscobel-8/19; Richland Center-8/20

Circus Smirkus: Barton, VT-8/17-18; Greensboro-19,20

Donn Moyer's Reptile Safari: Port Angeles, WA-8/17-20; Monroe-8/24-9/4; Colfax-9/8-10

BACK YARD

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NEWS FROM OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS

Paul Holley writes that Walker Bros. Circus did good business in Wisconsin in late July. The show was especially well received at two-day stands in Delavan and Watertown. Acts included Scott Taylor, ringmaster and illusions; Coco Kramer, clowning; Delilah Zerbini, unridable mule and foot juggling; Galles family, aerial cradle, hand balancing and perch pole. John Walker III worked four (yes, four!) Hawthorn elephants.

Gary Thomson writes "that there is an Irish circus fan who provides a lot of material to me for articles and covers. He is asking me to send out the word that he is looking for circus paper of various types from North America." Please contact **Louis Garvey**, Ross Lodge, Headford, Co. Gallway, Ireland. I know he would love to hear from you.

Wayne Bolz writes that Casady's Critters, which includes their Petting Zoo & Pony Rides, played Sheboygan, Cascade and Johnsonville, Wisconsin in early August. The Friends of the Circus Club meetings were in Lomira, under the big top and at Sheboygan County Museum.

Anyone having old circus photos for sale, please contact Cherie. I am always looking for photos to use in Back Yard. And they don't have to have names on them!

CIRCUS GATTI By Herb Ueckert

A tiny item in the Minneapolis newspaper alerted us to the fact that Circus Gatti was scheduled to appear in Mankato, Minnesota on July 22 for two shows at 2 PM and 7 PM in the Midwest Wireless Civic Center downtown in cooperation with a local merchant's association. Wide distribution of free children's coupons as well as some sort of discount ticket insured a good house with many young families for the 2 PM show requiring a delay in starting the performance in order to get everyone in. Having seen some great Circus Gatti productions in the past, it was unfortunate to note some disappointments in this year's offering.

Recorded music was used with a live drummer; costumes were sparkling and colorful and all wardrobe was excellent, right down to the neatly attired prop crew and working persons. Overall, the show could have benefited from better lighting and a tightening-up of its pace. Ringmaster Rico Dorado, whom we seem to recall from his appearance in a Sarasota Circus Festival several years ago, did an effective job of fulfilling his duties throughout the show with a very pleasant voice. Seating was excellent throughout the building which appeared to be relatively new but which afforded totally inadequate parking for show vehicles in the back yard. Store windows in Mankato and nearby communities were well papered with small posters in two different designs. Clowns TaTa and Charlie attempted to get the audience in the mood for the circus with some pre-show entertainment followed by the ringmaster's rendition of The Star Spangled Banner. Display One featured Vincent vonDuke with 4 tigers and 1 male and 3 female lions in the steel arena. The act, while quietly disciplined with a subtle attempt at humor, was fairly uninspired and consisted of the usual jumps, a tableau display with 5 cats, hurdles and the fire hoop. Display 2 was a three-ring offering with 2 girls on an aerial perch over each ring. Display 3 presented clowns Charlie and Monica (TaTa in drag) returning for a dance

audition with the ringmaster—un-funny and too long. Display 4 featured sword balancing by Mario and Robert on ladders in the end rings. Display 5 exhibited the talents of 2 liberty acts—miniature stallions and a small mule worked by the ringmaster and six Shetland ponies presented by Miss Angela. Display 6 was the Globe of Death with Mario, on a single motorcycle in the steel globe which oddly was set up in a corner of the arena. Display 7 found TaTa and Charlie returning with more quickly forgotten foolishness. Display 8 featured the ringmaster with his version of Mellenium Magic, the blade box routine, which led into Display 9, Circus Gatti's production number consisting of boy & girl dancers who could have used a bit more choreography and 5 girls on webs over the end rings with Miss Kimberly on the solo trapeze over the center ring & vocals by the ringmaster. Intermission followed with the inevitable and interminable pony rides, elephant rides and moon bounce. By actual count, over 120 persons rode the 2 elephants before rides were wisely suspended and patrons were asked to return after the show. After intermission, Display 10 resumed with the Mariah Sisters (2) on their rolling globes after a very brief flourish with hula hoops. Display 11, the flying trapeze act of the Flying Angels, proved to be disappointing—perhaps just a bad day for this young troupe. Display 12 found clown TaTa and the ringmaster in a dispute over a radio and its music in the ring. Display 13 was a pleasing but brief aerial adagio by 2 young ladies on the Roman rings over each end ring with a female vocalist in the center ring. Display 14 introduced Samantha with hula hoops in one end ring and Señor Carlos on the rola bola in the other end ring. Display 15 featured the Rodriguez Brothers on the Wheel of Death and Display 16 finally brought forth the Circus Gatti Elephants, worked with John Pelton, 3 Asians, including Tika, with her incredible barrel roll. A completely unexpected & delightful pleasure was running into Johnny Luxom who was manning a novelty stand in the foyer and whom we had not seen since our Circus Vargas days. In summary, all circuses are enjoyable for the genuine fan,

(Continued on Pg. 11)

Capt. Ken's Elephant Hay Roundup

By Mike Cecere

This is another tale from the chronicles of Capt. Ken Benson, his companion, the gentle giant, Asian Elephant, Boo and their mascot, Martin, the Wonder Dog. Continuing their journey nationwide, with Robert's Bros., America's Small Town Favorite Circus.

There is a lot to travelling with the tented city, taking care of the giant Boo, cleaning and setting up all her equipment. Setting up her shade awning and helping pull up the poles of the big top, much to the delight of circus Traditionalists.

But the biggest activity of nearly every day is the endless search for Elephant feed. A big girl like Boo needs a good 30 pounds of top horse feed and vitamins daily, year-round, which is not a big problem. Horse feed comes in bags and if stored in a dry place, is fresh for quite awhile. But hay, well that is another story.

With rural, open spaces and the number of farmers decreasing rapidly, nationwide, hay is getting hard to get. While there are a number of large operations in several states that custom bale hay for the horse industry, shipping hay everywhere, the hay supply of a tent show depends on the weather conditions where the show is playing.

Usually, area farmers sell a few dozen bales of their extra hay to feed stores and it's not too hard to track down. But if there's a drought, floods or some other calamity, farmers look to provide for their livestock. And with dozens of farmers leaving farming monthly, or downsizing due to high fuel costs, the supply of hay dwindles all the time.

What's more, as a labor saving device, many farmers are using round hay balers, by which a large, round bale or huge square bale (consisting of the equivalent of some 15 to 20 small bales) which then can be rapidly picked up by machinery and stacked for later use.

That's a problem for shows moving everyday and are used to feeding and carrying the smaller bales. Capt. Ken keeps a list of friendly farmers along their route who often provide hay year after year

for his Jumbo charges. But, sometimes, the circus comes back, but the farmers aren't in business anymore. So, Capt. Ken and the other circuses and Elephant operations could use a big hand from the friends and fans of the gentle giants.

If the friends of the great beasts could call around in their home areas, no long distance calls necessary, just call around, ask friends or neighbors if they know where they could get, say, 10-50 bales of good hay, in square bales, and an idea of how much they'd want and if they could bring it out to the lot.

Tell them about the fun of helping out a traditional form of entertainment. Or get someone who could bring it out to the show. And, of course, the show will pay for it in cash\$, which would ease their minds on how they are going to get paid if they haven't sold to shows before.

Let me tell you, that would sure take a load off the minds of animal people who often spend a good portion of many days before the show, tracking down animal feed. While some big shows have 24-hour men to handle this, they sure wouldn't mind a hand in this, I am sure!

Capt. Ken and the gentle giant, Boo, would sure appreciate your assistance! God Bless America!

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NEWS FROM OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS

Herb Ueckert writes "Also on the midway in Milwaukee at the Lakeshore grounds during Parade Week was **Ken Harck's** new side show endeavor which drew large and enthusiastic audiences. On the return trip in the motorhome from Milwaukee, Neil Cockerline and I stopped not only in Baraboo but in Wisconsin Dells where we enjoyed the opportunity to visit with **Tim and GiGi Tegge** at Storybook Gardens where they present their delightful little show geared mainly to young children. The Culpepper-Merriweather Circus is still in the area and we hope to see it soon. Cirque du Soleil's "Dralion" unit will be opening on a riverfront lot in Minneapolis August 17. Being in Minnesota has afforded some memorable circus opportunities!

CIRCUS GATTI.....

and Circus Gatti is no exception. Its obvious shortcomings could be fixed. Errors and omissions in names in this review are the responsibility of the writer; a printed program was not available. (Thanks Herb and Neil! Hope you will report on other circuses that visit your area this summer).

Passing Of Our Circus Friends

***Ernestine Clarke Baer** passed away this week, but at this time, I do not have any details. I will have more by the next issue. Our prayers our with her family.

***Fred Dahlinger** wrote "One of the great gentleman of the circus business, **Rudy Bundy**, passed away August 1. Rudy was born April 28, 1907, in Quaker City, Ohio and moved to Sarasota in 1938. He was an orchestra and big band leader. He was vice president, treasurer and a member of the board of directors on Ringling.

He retired in 1970. He is survived by 4 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandchild. There was a memorial service August 6th with a reception at the Showfolks of Sarasota Club thereafter."

The family suggests memorials to either the Children's Haven, 4405 DeSoto Rd., Sarasota, FL 34235 or to Showfolks of Sarasota, 5204 N. Lockwood Ridge Rd., Sarasota, FL 34234.

*If anyone would like to send cards to **John Marietta's** family, their address is: 2305 W. 4th St., Pittsburg, KS 66762. John passed away July 31.

NEWS FROM BOBBY GIBBS

Shane Johnson is returning home from the Carden show, having 2 weeks off. We got to see **Ringling Red** in Dallas July 28th. **Mark David (Pilger)** got us tickets for the evening performance, plus we went back stage for visits with **Carlos Svenson, Rick Boger, Roy and Cindy Wells, Catherine Hanneford, Tim Holst** and scores of others. We had a great time!

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PERU - 2000 OPENING

By Phillip L. Krahn

Season opening day for the new millennium at the Circus Hall of Fame found final preparations being made early in the morning. Ringmaster John Fugate was nervously covering the entire lot to see that all the performers had arrived and props were being strategically placed. Hall of Fame President Tom Dunwoody was briefing the volunteer staff members on last minute details. Mary Kay Dunwoody was found inside a glass showcase positioning descriptive placards and covering the floor with sawdust. Dave Morecraft was checking out the sound system, organizing his tapes and preparing to fire up the steam calliope for the first time since February.

Members of the CFA/CMB/CHS, representing eight tops/tents/rings from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio were setting out circus memorabilia to be swapped/sold/donated around the perimeter of the big top. Except for some pin holes of light shining through the sidewalls, the top is in excellent shape. Power drills were whirring as bleacher seats were being assembled for the summer-long season.

Doug Terranova, animal behaviorist and his assistant Jeremiah were putting up a top to protect the 5 tigers he is continuing to train in the steel arena. The 3 elephants and the ponies and horses were already stabled in the South barn of the former winter quarters of the American Circus Corporation. The North barn proudly wears a new roof, a coat of yellow paint and 9-pane, custom made, windows like the barn originally had.

The lot is colorfully decorated with circus wagons from the growing collection of the Circus Hall of Fame. Some recently painted (one by Michigan's Dorothy Herbert Tent #129), some recently restored and some recently purchased and awaiting restoration and or painting.

A new concessionaire has the healthiest looking, best tasting hamburgers you'll find on any lot.

At ten minutes to twelve, the steam calliope let go

a shrill whistle to alert the performers the first show of the season was about to begin. Next, air calliope music filled the air, followed by Dave moving to the keyboard with trumpet in hand and tapes ready to go. Following a welcome by Ringmaster Fugate, Maya Zerbini opened the show with her 9 poodles of all sizes. Armondo Cristiani's juggling is surpassed only by the smile on his face as the fans applaud his skills. Armondo represents the ninth generation of Cristiani's to perform. His family was inducted into the Circus Hall of Fame in 1994.

Bob-O and Rod-O, the clowns, then entertained all and buffaloeed the Ringmaster with their balancing of three balls on a pool cue routine. Bob "Bob-O" Hurley has been clowning (and playing Santa Claus) for more than fifty years!

Darrel Wallen, of nearby Blufton, Indiana, and his 3 year old jet black American Saddle Bred horse, Ebony King, present a dressage act reminiscent of the first American circuses, 200 years ago.

Next, Lilly Esquade, queen of the air, marvels us with her single trapeze act. Closing the show is a fast paced three elephant routine presented by Doug Terranova. After the big top performance, there is still much to see and do. Elephant and pony rides, calliope concerts, Bengal and Siberian tiger training demonstrations with spell binding and informative narration by Doug Terranova and just wandering around the lot to see and smell the real circus experience.

The Hall of Fame North Barn exhibits, honoring circus performers, have been supplemented by general circus exhibits housed in glass show cases donated by the Field Museum of Chicago, Illinois.

All these circus activities present a golden opportunity for a family oriented outing of exciting times for a very reasonable cost. These activities will continue until Labor Day and are well worth a trip to the historic American Circus Corporation grounds at Peru, Indiana.

.....
*Mickey King celebrated her 95th birthday on 8/6 with a great party at the Circus Hall of Fame in Peru! Write her at: #1 Plaza Dr., Plaza Trailer Ct., Peru, IN 46970.

A PAWS FROM MOZART

By Mozart Valentine

MEOW everyone, welcome back to my column. My friend, **Larson E. Whipsnade**, of Indiana, sent me a great poster with all different cats of every size and color on it! If you have this year's calendar from the Humane Society of the United States, you will see my brother, **Wolfgang**, is the star for June. And please turn ahead to November for a great photo of **ME!** Did know we were celebrities, did you?

Larson also sent along the clipping of the new baby boy at the **Indianapolis Zoo!** "It's A Boy!" What a great headline. He weighed 252 pounds and is the first male African conceived by artificial insemination. **Debbie Olson**, director of conservation and science programs at the Zoo said he began nursing and was very vocal about it-he started yelling. "The baby is big and strong and has a very strong nursing instinct."

Ivory, 18, gave birth in 30 minutes August 4th, almost 2 weeks early and delivery was so quick senior veterinarian Jeff Proudfoot didn't have time to get there. This is Ivory's first baby and he will join **Amali**, born to **Kubwa** on March 6th. Debbie said, "Amali comes in, and the door is cracked, and we see her peeking in. We like to think she's peeking in to see what's going on with the baby." Debbie slept in the barn Sunday night.

Ivory's artificial insemination took place over Halloween weekend in 1998 with semen collected from a bull elephant, **MacLain**, housed at Disney's Animal Kingdom in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

Our friend **Buddy Calhoun** wrote that the **Jackson, Mississippi Zoo** received over \$160,000 in admissions from a **Faith Hill/Tim McGraw** concert held on the Zoo grounds on July 1. Money will be used to help build a new state-of-the-art educational facility for the Zoo. Faith Hill is from the tiny little town of Star, just below Jackson. Of course, the fact that her brother is the educational director for the Zoo probably played some part in Faith's, and husband, Tim's, decision to donate

their valuable services in the middle of an outstanding national tour. The animals and their friends are all better off for the efforts of Faith and Tim! Friends **Richard and Doris Menkel** sent an article from Brazil: Six lions escaped from a circus and caused panic in a Brazilian town early August 7th but injured only a horse before police shot them. The lions broke out of their cages before sunrise and prowled for almost 6 hours through Sao Simao. Five lions mauled to death a 6-year-old boy at a circus in Brazil in April.

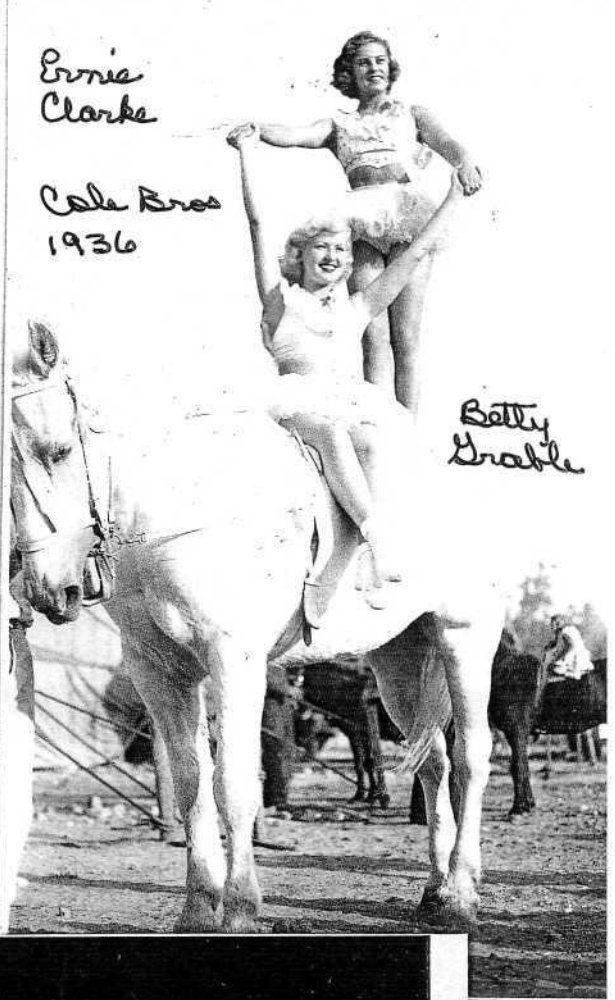
My buddy, **Denny Childers**, sent an article from the Evansville paper about "Bunny Day Sept. 9." The **Elephant Sanctuary** in Hohenwald, Tenn. will hold "Bunny Day" for Indiana residents only to visit **Bunny**, a former resident of **Mesker Park Zoo**. The one-time event is the result of an agreement made with Evansville when the city decided to move Bunny last year, said **Carol Buckley**, director of the Sanctuary. Carol said Bunny is the loudest of the sanctuary's 6 elephants when meals are delivered. "She's the trumpeter. It's hysterical." Bunny arrived at the Zoo in 1954 when she was three years old and to many residents she was a beloved fixture in Evansville.

More good news for the six "girls" at the Sanctuary. They will be getting a new friend soon. "**Winkie**" who has spent most of her life at the **Vilas Park Zoo** in Madison, Wisconsin, will be packing her trunk and moving to Tennessee! "**Penny**," a young African at the Vilas Park Zoo, will move first to the **Columbus Zoo** while construction is completed at the **Riverbanks Zoo** in Columbia, South Carolina, her eventual home.

The **Cleveland Metroparks Zoo** had a record breaking attendance in July of 253,452! A baby dromedary camel was born there on June 27. A sad note from the Zoo, one of the baby koalas died on July 24 at the age of eight months. Preliminary results indicate an intestinal ulcer was the primary cause of death. Well, that is about all for now. Please write and let us know what is going on in the Zoos in your area. When you visit the circuses & Zoos, be sure to tell them Mozart said hello! **Meow for now, Mozart!**



Jack
Jaffe
1936



Ernie
Clarke
Cole Bros
1936

Betty
Grable

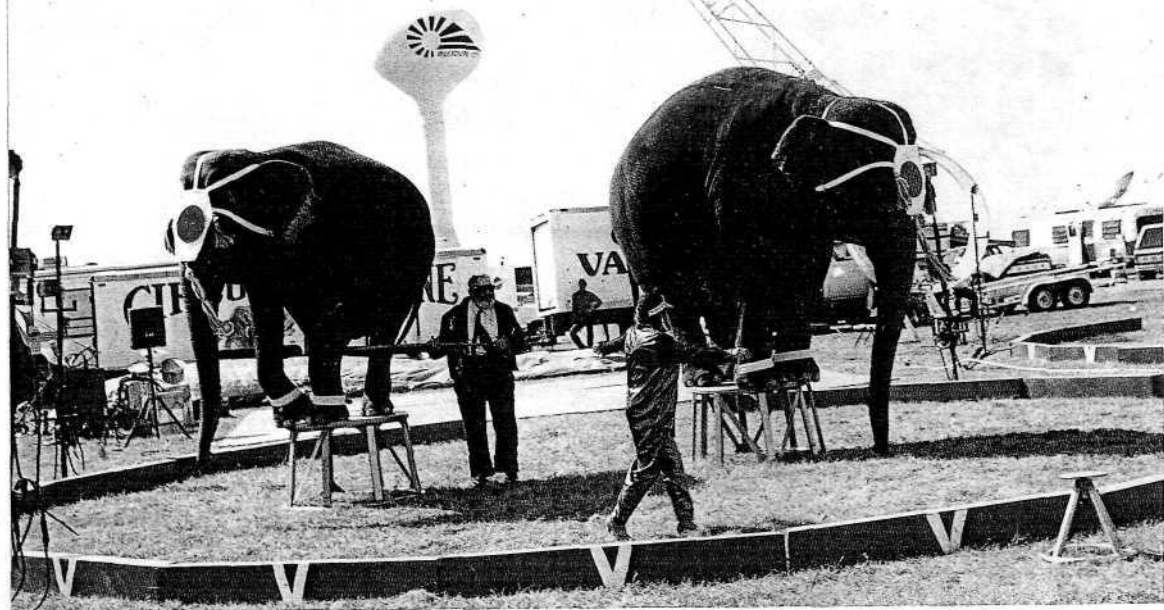
JAMES
III



Rudy
BUNDY

Bobby + Rosa Libke
Betty + Judy

Circus Valentine



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