

"America's Favorite Circus Weekly"

4th Year

February 10, 1975

Number 6

# Freedom Train Deadline Nears

A 140 man team is racing against a deadline to complete work on a moving bicentennial monument. The men are refurbishing 12 railway postal cars at Richmond (Calif.) for the American Freedom Train, part of a 22 car unit that will carry an encyclopedia of American history around the country.



The first three cars, brightly painted red, white and blue, are on their way to an assembly station in Virginia. In the meantime workmen at Venice

(Fla) are preparing another ten cars for the train.

The Freedom Train has been sanctioned by the government's bicentennial committee and will start its 21 month journey from Wilmington (Dela) on April 1st. The train is the idea and dream of Ross Rowland, of Chicago, who in 1966 restored a locomotive and some cars to celebrate the linking of the U.S. by rails a 100 years earlier.

The success of that "Golden Spike Centennial Ltd." gave

(Continued on Page 11)

## Advance Man

From a teaching assistant to purchasing agent for Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus is the move that Marshall Esterson recently made. The step into show business was made possible after he answered an advertisement in the newspaper.

I was looking for something different, says Esterson, who holds two Masters degrees and has nearly completed his Ph. D. requirements.

(Continued on Back Page)

## show Visitors

Among those seen visiting Circus Vargas during its engagement at San Bernardino (Calif.), on Jan. 26-27 were:

Blackie Martin, Mingo, Dan Thomas, Frank and Bernice Dean, Al Mall, the John Strong Family, Eddie Howe, Tom and Rob-in Bishop, Smokey Jones, George and Gay Perkins, Herbert Weber and Joe Colby.

## HOSPITALIZED

RAYFIELD JOHNSON, former circus giant, has been hospitalized at Morningside Hospital in Los Angeles, Calif.

JACK LEONTINI, a partner in the Wallenda Circus, was recently hospitalized at the East Manor Nursing Home in Sarasota, Fla.

## In Memoriam

RAY RODMAN, former elephant man with most of the west coast shows, died at Bloomington, Cal. on Jan. 29th of pneumonia and other complications. He was a familiar figure on the old Clyde Beatty and Graham Bros. circus.

HORACE MURPHY (93) of the Murphy's Comedians, a dramatic tent show on the west coast, died at a nursing home in North Hollywood (Cal.) on Jan. 20th. His wife, Peggy, survives.

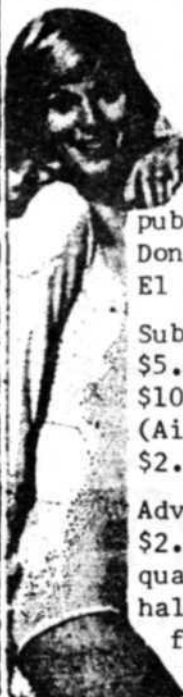
## sawdust trail

First reports from Fisher Bros. Circus, in winterquarters at Donna, Texas, are that they will open on Feb. 15th. New wardrobe is now ready and Jim Davis has been named manager for the 1975 season.

H. T. "Tex" Dreyfus, CFA & CMB member, was at Arransas Pass (Tex.) on Jan. 27th to catch the opening of the Al G. Clark & Dailey Bros. Circus.

When Charles Moyer closed his Charles Bros. Circus last fall he joined Lewis Bros. for the remainder of the season.

.....M. L. Dupont



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Advertising rates are: \$2.50 minimum; \$5.00 a quarter page; \$10.00 a half page and \$20.00 a full page (checks due with orders).

Despite some rain Circus Vargas drew capacity business for all four of its performances at San Bernardino (Cal) where the show opened its 1975 tour on Jan. 26-27.

The program, which ran 2½ hours on opening night (included a 15 minute intermission) was a fast-paced show without the frills of the past. There's plenty of action and circus here for everyone, with good lighting for each presentation. All equipment has been painted and repaired and looks good. The big top has been completely repaired and now looks almost like new.

The show features two specs, with all personnel and animals in the opening number. The parade includes eight bulls, with colorful blankets and showgirls on their heads, in excellent costumes and head pieces. There are also some pony drawn cages, complete with live animals, but the highlight is the tiger riding an elephant at the end of the parade.

The closing spec brings all the performers back into the tent in colorful garb and flags, while the elephants do a long mount on the track.

Because of a dispute with the local Musicians Union, who wanted a 21 piece band at \$6000 for the four shows, the regular two man band didn't work. Recorded music was used and it came over well and was all circus.

Only two pitches were made inside the tent and both were before the program started. One was for the reserved seats on



the long side, which sell for \$1.00 extra, while the other was for the side show/zoo.

On the front end are the side show/zoo, with colorful banners; a concession tent; the marquee; a moon bounce and a pony ride. Also spotted here is the show's new office semi, no doubt the largest of its kind on the road today.

The circus staff includes:  
 Cliff Vargas - pres./gen. mgr.  
 Wally Naghtin - mgr. on show  
 Bill Biggerstaff - front door  
 Doug Lyon - press representative  
 Bob J. Zanotti - traffic mgr.  
 Wally Ross - animal supt.  
 Sandy Dobritch - ringmaster/ann.

The program features:  
 Harry Thomas, Jr. - tigers  
 Ron & Joy Holiday - gorilla act  
 The Clementis - bicycles  
 Feller Boys & Dodo - tightwire  
 The Hansienis - ladder/balance  
 Los Latinos - flying act  
 Wally Naghtin - bears

(Continued on Back Page)

# ROUTES

## Big John's Tent Circus

- Feb. 10 Santee, Calif.
- 11 Ramona
- 12 Poway
- 13 Off
- 14 Brawley
- 15 Calexico
- 16 Off

## Circo Americano

Feb 13-Mar 9 San Juan, P.R.

## Circus Vargas

Feb. 12-13 Pensacola, Fla.  
15-19 Birmingham, Ala.

## Al G. Clark & Dailey Bros.

- Feb. 3 Kingsville, Ark.
- 4 Falfurrias
- 5 Miranda City
- 6 Freer
- 7 Tilton
- 8 Floresville

## L. N. Fleckles Circus

to Feb. 16 Hartford, Conn.

## Happytime Circus

Feb. 14-17 Cloverdale, Calif.

## Kaye Continental Circus

Feb. 5-9 Cleveland, Ohio  
14-16 Tucson, Ariz.

## Mahari Shrine Circus

Feb. 12-16 Miami, Fla.

## Polack Bros. Circus

Feb. 13-15 Akron, Ohio

## Ringling-Barnum - Blue Unit

Feb. 12-23 Atlanta, Ga.

## Ringling-Barnum - Red Unit

Feb. 11-16 Norfolk, Va.

## Married

The wedding of trapeze performer Raul Valdez and balancing performer Eva Zvitaoi was recently reported by the Associated Press.

After the double ring ceremony in Miami Beach (Fla.) the couple presented a trapeze act for their reception guests.

## Auction Sale

- 1 - Cole Bros. Circus programs for years 1935 to 1949
- 2 - Hobby Bandwagon - Apr. 1947 to Oct. 1950 complete.

Each item is to be sold as a complete unit - no individual copies sold.

FRANK J. POUSKA

5116 East 88th Street  
Garfield Heights, OH 44125

## Royal Lipizzan Stallion Show

Feb. 11-23 San Juan, P. R.

..... OTHER ROUTES .....

## Ice Capades

Feb. 11-16 Champaign, Ill.

## Kramien's Magic Capades

- Feb. 11 Sierra Vista, Ariz.
- 12 Douglas
- 13 Wilcox
- 14 Silver City, N.M.

## Nat'l Date Festival

Feb. 14-23 Indio, Calif.

## Star Trek Convention

Feb. 14-17 New York, N.Y.

# Evans to Lead Corydon Band

For some 28 years circus enthusiast Ward Stauth has made sure that a good band was on hand for entertainment at each meeting of the Harrison County (Ind.) Soil & Water Conservation District. This year he's planned a real feat, one of the best programs ever and the public is invited.

At tomorrow's meeting (Feb. 11), in Corydon, Ind., the band will be lead by Merle Evans, the "Toscanini of the Big Top." Evans, who is famous for his circus music with the RBBB Circus, began his career as a cornet player with the Cotton Blossom Showboat Band in 1910.



Since his retirement in 1968, Evans has been conducting band: all over the

country. One of the things that has made Evans great is his attention to details. He won the Conn Music Co. award for excellence, the first year it was presented (1968).

Ward Stauth, who is chairman of the Conservation District, plans to retire this year. He has been with the district for 24 years. Stauth is an officer and active member of the comparatively new but fast growing Windjammers Unlimited, a group dedicated to preserving real circus music for all the future generations of circus fans.

TEX DREYFUS reports he may exhibit his model circus in conjunction with Circus Vargas' engagement at Houston, Texas.

## PEOPLE

BOB MATTHEWS, old-time circus performer, was recently released from a hospital and is now in a Los Angeles (Cal.) area nursing home.

CHRIS BRICKER has reportedly taken a leave of absence from his job with RBBB this year.

BEN HAMMER, CFA of Southern California, recently underwent surgery in a Los Angeles area hospital.

ENOCH BRADFORD continues to handle canvas for the De Wayne Bros. Circus.

BOB MacDOUGALL, CFA and CMB has joined the RBBB Blue Unit's Wardrobe Dept.

WILLIAM KAY has been named manager of the Wallenda Circus. He will also continue operation of his own show.

ROBIN and TOM BISHOP have an aerial cradle act ready for their upcoming tour with the Big John Strong Circus.

# YEARS AGO

Pittsfield, Mass.

June 10, 1922

RBBB Circus at Pittsfield, Mass. - June 10, 1922.

The circus carried 351 baggage horses and 141 ring horses, plus 28 elephants, 16 camels, 2 baby camels, a zebra, 2 mules and some 20 ponies.

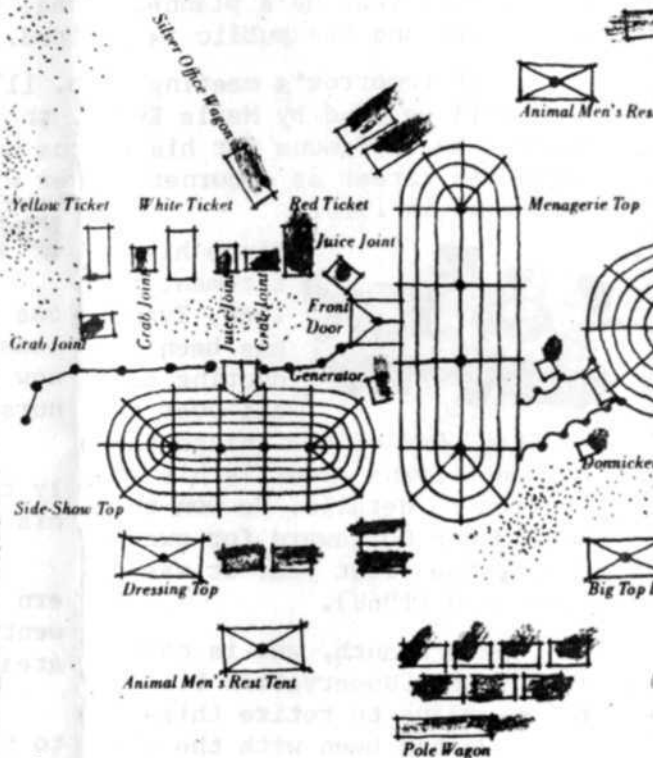
The tents include: big top, menagerie, two side shows, two concession stands, two baggage horse tops, dining tent, cookhouse, ring horse top, dressing tent, candy butchers, wardrobe, band, wild west, props and blacksmith shop.

The No. 2 side show was called Curioland and featured: 12 attractions, six small cages, parrots and an air calliope. The open frontend had 3 ticket boxes, and one ticket taker.

This circus uses two electric light plants, 2 gasoline wagons, 7 cages of animals for the big show, small cart for the seals, 3 cages of wild animals, a cart, a trick auto, tractor and three giraffes.

The wagons are all red and white, or yellow and white.

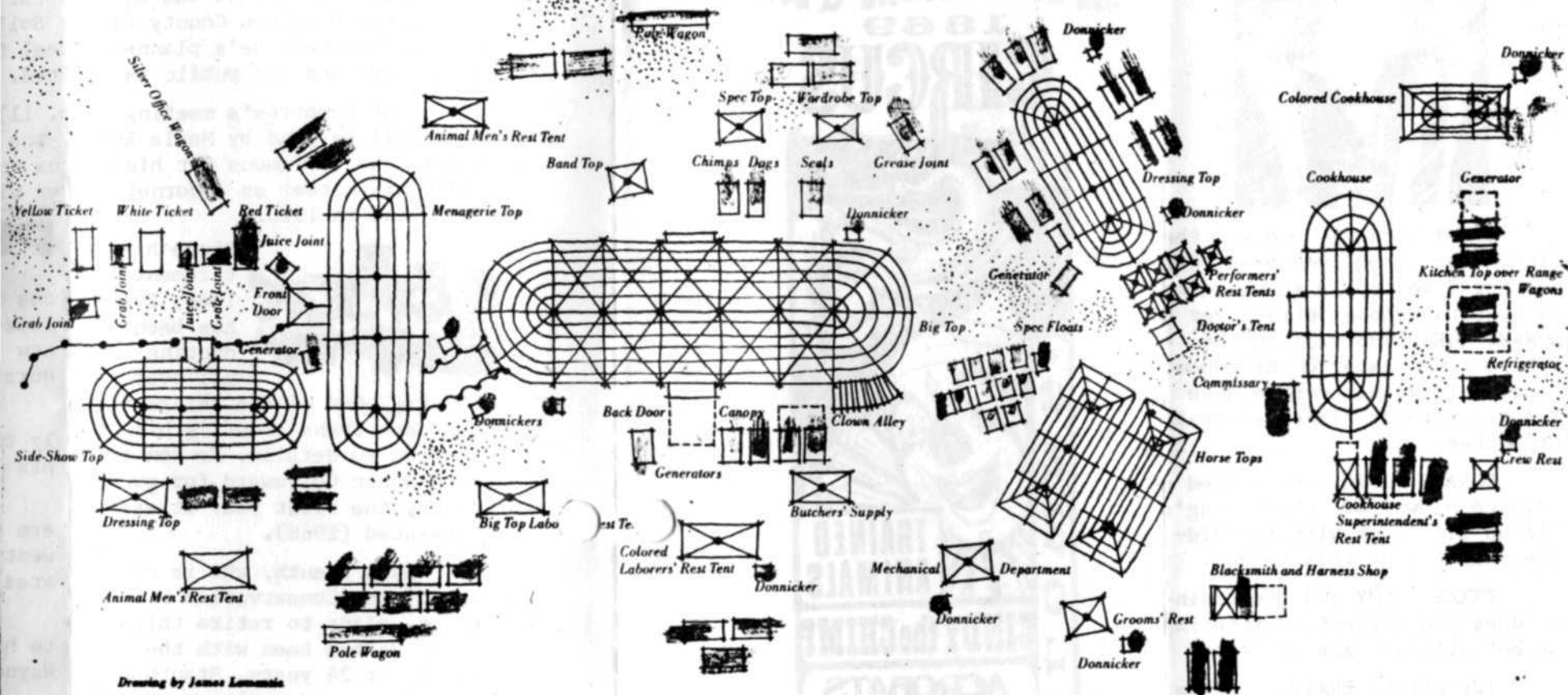
## THE CIRCUS, UN



*Drawing by James Lomantia*

The sleepers are painted red, while the stock cars and flat cars are yellow and green.

# THE CIRCUS, UNDER CANVAS, IS SELF-SUFFICIENT



The circus lot, as here diagramed, is called a straightaway, or a "Yankee Robinson" layout. Since such an arrangement demands a piece of ground measuring at least eighteen acres it is not an everyday possibility to the traveling circus. The main entrance gate is placed in the middle of the left-hand short side of the rectangle. Customers see only the midway, side show, menagerie, and main tent, but there is much more. The most important subsidiary tents are in the back yard. They are the main dressing tent, the "horse tops," the cookhouse, and the performers' rest tents.

The sleepers are painted red, while the stock cars and flat cars are yellow and green.

The matinee show started at 2:30 p.m. with a good crowd and there were a few showers in the afternoon. The night show got started

at 8 p.m. and also had a good crowd.

The cookhouse and horse tents were down by 6 p.m.

# PEOPLE



**LUCKY LARABEE**, who was the ringmaster with Clyde Bros. Circus for 7 years, is shown here as he turns those duties over to **HOWARD SUESZ** who will be the future ring master on his show. Larabee is going to freelance and has already signed several big dates.

**DONALD YOUNG**, who worked as advance clown for John Strong's Circus will tour with the Mid-American Circus this season.

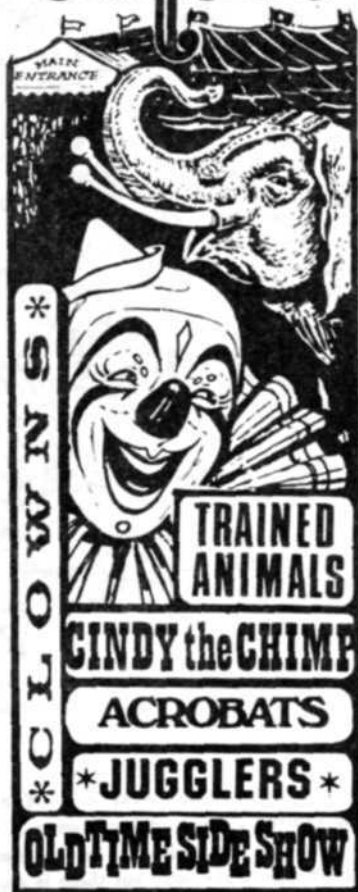
**TEXAS TOMMY** and his trained dogs are currently wintering at Bob Gibb's place in Texas.

**THE FLYING BRAYTONS** are a feature of the Atayde Circus in Mexico City. They'll be there about 10 weeks.

**ALBERT LUCAS**, juggler, is currently touring with a unit of the Ice Capades show.

**ROGANA**, sword balance, was the only circus act shown on a recent TV Special called "A Salute to Ed Sullivan."

## Holloway Productions presents **BIG JOHN STRONG & SON** 1869 **CIRCUS**



**UNDER THE  
BIG TOP**

**May 15**

**Santa Ana, Calif.**



JERRY BOOKER and his trained Hyena "Hapiso". The animal is a full grown African spotted hyena, which is just one of the many and unique features of J. P. Booker's "Early American Circus."

Dates are available for the 75 season. Contact: Jerry Booker, 1645 Rucker Ave., Gilroy, Calif. 95020.

## Letters

Your little paper certainly brings results. We were able to purchase a rolling globe within a few days after our ad appeared in Circus Report.

.....Dave Twomey

Don't let my subscription expire. Here's my renewal check for 1975.

.....Ella Logan

## BIG JOHN STRONG

announces

The opening of his booking and show office, in charge of Robin Bishop.

The office, at 1533 West 11th St., (No. 15), Upland, Calif. is open from 9 to 12 each week day. The phone number is: (714) 985-4645.

## '75 PLANS

According to a recently published report the George Matthew Circus will tour in 1975 as per usual. However, showman Sid Kellner reportedly said the tour this year may be somewhat shorter than last years.

Kellner called the 1974 season "spotty" and said that while the circus had enjoyed some good dates there were also several big losses.

The report stated that Kellner has denied his circus would stay in the barn, or that it is to be reduced in size. The circus, he said, would tour the same size as last year, and with its usual strong program.

**SEND YOUR NEWS ...**

Send your news items about the shows that play your area so we can all keep up on what's doing and where they are.

# New Riding Act Tours With C-J

A new Zoppe riding act will make its debut on the Carden & Johnson Circus this spring. The act is also scheduled to appear at rodeos and special events later in the year.

The new riding act will feature 20 year old James Zoppe, a seventh generation bareback rider of the celebrated circus family. His aunt, Yolanda Zoppe, will also be in the act. She will be clowning and keep the horses at their brisk pace.

The Zoppes have been practicing the act at quarters in Seagoville, Texas. They will be using three horses in the act.

Another Zoppe riding act, headed by Joe, was with the Circus Atayde in Mexico City over the holidays. They are currently on tour with the Hubert Castle Circus.



## GFA Elects

Members of the CFA's Fred Buchanan Top (South Dakota) recently elected new officers for the coming year.

Jack Snavelly, advertising director for the Sioux Falls Argus-Leader, was named State Chairman, at the meeting held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Gabel.

Paul Hoy, of Sioux Falls, is director of District 5, which includes North and South Dakota and Nebraska.

## TODAY IS CIRCUS DAY IN\_\_?

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**FREEDOM TRAIN** (Continued)

birth to the bicentennial train won Rowland support from PepsiCo Inc., General Motors, Prudential Insurance and Kraft Foods. Their donations have made it possible to get the train ready and provide advance personnel.

It will cost more than \$1000 per mile to move the train and this money is expected to come from admission tickets (\$1.50 for adults and \$1.00 for kids) and souvenirs.

The train will visit 76 cities in the 48 states over a period of 21 months. After touring the Atlantic coast states the train will move into New England, then heads west across the northern half of the nation. It will move south along the Pacific coast, before heading east through the southern states, with the tour ending at Miami (Fla) on Dec. 23, 1976.

Included in the documents and exhibits on the train will be:

Benjamin Franklin's draft of the Articles of Confederation, Revolutionary War rifles, George Washington's copy of the Constitution, the first Bible printed in America, Gold miner's tools, Ty Cobb's, Lou Gehrig's and Joe DiMaggio's baseball bats.

Also included will be Franklin D. Roosevelt's Pearl Harbor speech to Congress, President

**Officers Named**

The results of the recent election of officers for the coming year, by members of the Joseph Andrew Rowe CFA Tent (in the Los Angeles area) were released this week to Circus Report.

Serving the organization for 1975 will be:--

Al Webb - president  
Jim Depiro - vice president  
Glenn Harrison - treasurer  
Gene Moreland - publicity

**Show Story**

The Dallas (Texas) Morning News, of Jan. 26, 1975, carried a full page feature about the Hubert Castle Circus and its activities.

Pictures with the story included Hubert Castle, Joanne Pinson, Red Hartman and Jimmy Plunkett. Incidentally, Jimmy is working up a wire routine under the direction of Mr. Castle.

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John Kennedy's Inaugural address plus Martin Luther King's Bible, some moon rocks, a moon flag and tapes of the first moon landing.

CIRCUS VARGAS (Continued)

Semon's chimps

Senor Antonio - one finger stand  
balance/single trapeze

Dante - one finger stand/balan.

Original Shappis - comedy act

Vashek Duo - wire walk/motorcycle

Jan Bickmore - single trapeze

Wally Ross - elephants/horses

Marcos Barrigan and John Peers  
- circus clowns

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NEWS NOTES ....

The Circus of Wonders Show has been pulling good business at its engagements in Southern California

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ADVANCE MAN (Continued)

Esterson says he didn't know the first thing about a circus when he accepted the job, but he's learned a lot since. I can even tell the difference between good and bad hay, he adds.

The job keeps Esterson on the road almost all year long. It's up to him to see that the circus, its people and animals, move in and out of town smoothly. He also has to make sure there's enough food on hand for the animals and anything else that is required.

The animals never stop eating, he said, so I buy eggs by the gross, carrots by the ton and bread and hay by the truck load.

(This item has been condensed and re-written from an article sent in by Eric Wilson).