

# White Tops

Sept/Oct 2018

The Circus Fans Association of America Vol 91 No 5



The Ayala Perch Pole Family  
on Star Family Circus  
photo by Dan Weaver



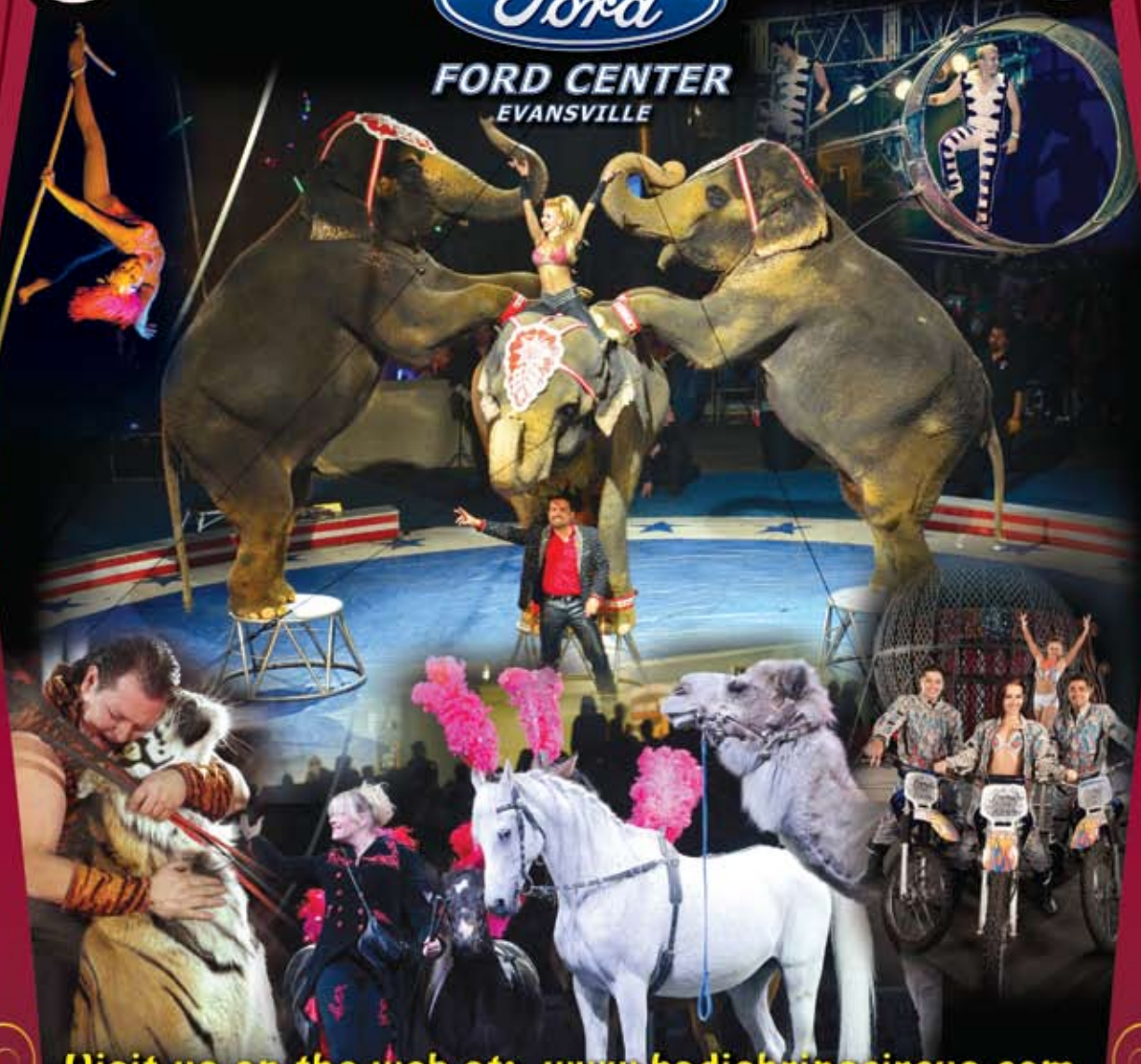
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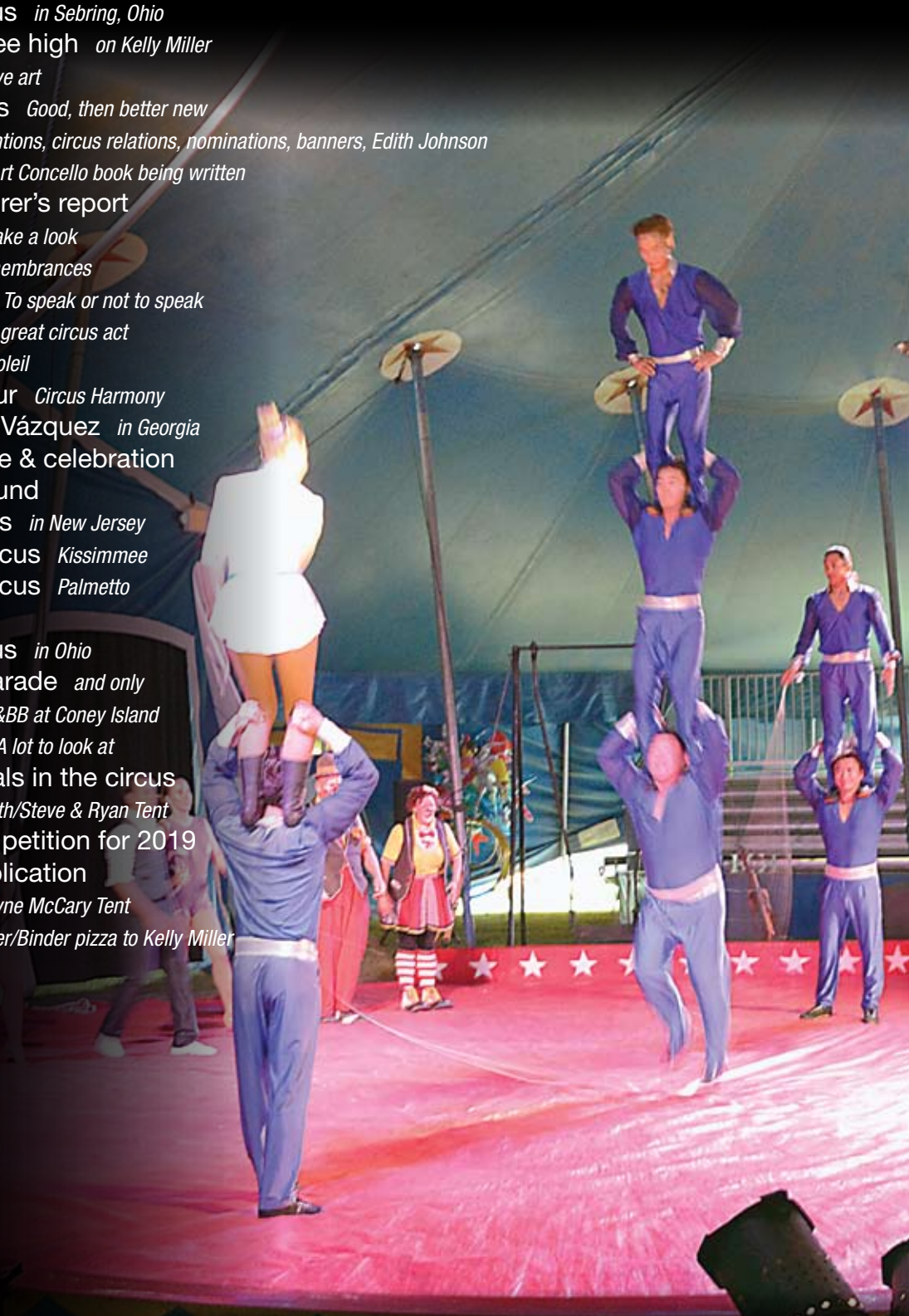
# The White Tops

September/October 2018  
Volume 91 Number 5  
A publication of the  
CIRCUS FANS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA  
since 1927

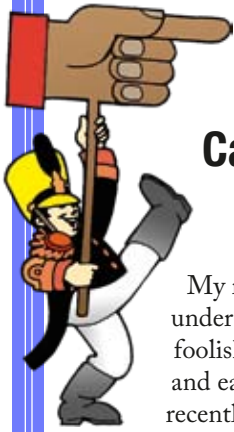
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*Three high jump rope*  
**The Mongolian Troupe**  
**on Kelly Miller Circus**

photo by John Wells







# STRAKA STRUTS

article & photos from Mike Straka

## Cave art



My roommate in under-graduate college foolishly decided to go on and earn a PhD in Archeology. He recently filled me in on a new discovery. This "find" has not been released to the public. It has been the subject of a scientific paper submitted to an archeological conference. I will give you the shorthand on the paper and spare you the pain of attending a scientific conference. I believe that instead of waterboarding Al Qaida prisoners, all they had to do is make them sit through one of these conferences. After a few hours they would be singing their hearts out. "I'll tell you all of our secret plans, just tell them to stop!"

Oh, I'm a little off my point (if I ever had one). The discovery involved a recent cave art discovery. They had several highly educated professors jump in to pontificate the meaning of the pictographs. The professors estimate the cave drawings are 30,000 to 32,000 years old. This is based on garbage left in the nearby fire pit. (Now you see why I feel sorry for my friend). I suspect the dating of the garbage was left to a lowly undergraduate student, "Here, date this garbage."

Unfortunately, the professors got this interpolation all wrong. One glance told me what our Neanderthal artist had in mind. Here are the correct interpolations of the cave drawings. ➡



*Obviously a spec number*



*Elephant act, maybe Cheerful Gardener*



## The White Tops

The official publication of the  
Circus Fans Association of America

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## News, articles & photographs

To send your materials for *The White Tops* magazine, first contact the editors for the password to the website. Then go to  
<<http://whitetops.org/>>.

Select the **White Tops** button and follow the directions. You may submit as many stories and photographs as you wish. There is no limit to file size. Any file format will be fine. See page 11, Sept./Oct. 2018 *White Tops* for more detailed instructions. Submissions by U. S. Mail should go to:  
*The White Tops*, 40 Winthrop Road,  
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### Publisher

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## President's Notes

by Jan Biggerstaff

<circusjan@hotmail.com>

Hi again.

I have good news and better news – first the good news – the 2019 CFA Convention has been decided – it will be held in West Springfield MA in conjunction with the Big E Fair beginning Wednesday September 25

to Saturday September 28, 2019. (This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the fair.)

Proposed events included so far are a gala reception; the Big E Circus Spectacular produced by Billy Martin; late night Jackpot Junction and films; seminars; auction; banquet, of course, with a surprise speaker; and free time at the fair. This is going to be a fun event and more details will be in the next issue of *The White Tops* along with the registration form. Again September 25-28, 2019 – mark your calendars, **now!**

The better news is the Circus Summit is really only postponed and the committee is feverishly working with all circus organizations to make the event one to remember. Obviously

getting all the organizations together on a location, date and other details is like herding cats – it can be done, just takes some effort.

In reviewing old *White Tops* issues, I came across an article telling that 50 years ago this year a decal was proposed by Henry Bush and Ray Dirgo that created the design for the decal. The logo has stood the test of time and is used in all CFA advertising, letterheads and even patches that adorn many CFA jackets.

### 1968 White Tops

“The new CFA decal is an attractive addition to your CFA membership and one that you will be proud to display. Much credit is due Henry Bush who had the idea for a CFA decal and to Ray Dirgo who created a beautiful design.

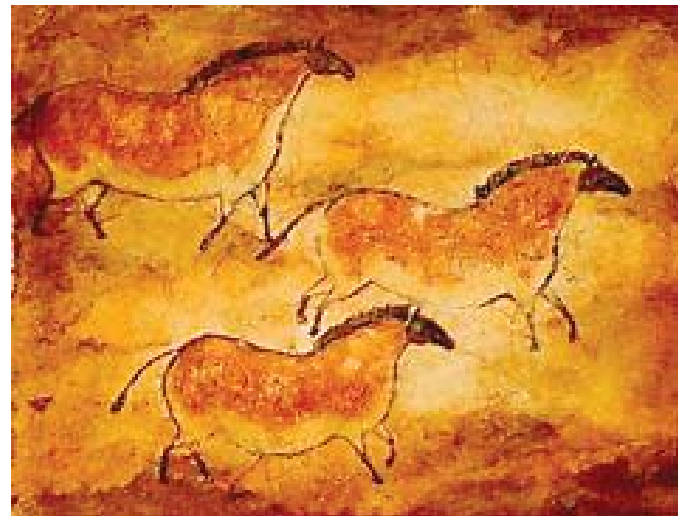
(Now...Get your CFA Decal! Sent anywhere in the U.S.A. postpaid for only 50 cents each, or 3 for \$1.25. Order direct to Henry R. Bush....)”

Patches and pins with the same art work are now available for \$5.00 each which includes postage. But sorry, no decals. (See in this issue of *The White Tops* page 10.) Make your check/money order payable to CFA and mail to Cheryl Deptula, 3660 Morningside Way, Lorain OH 44053. 📧

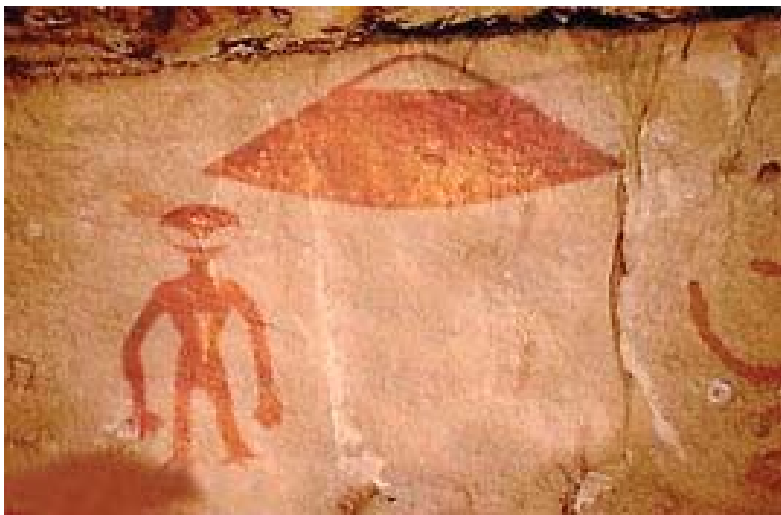
### 📧 Straka Struts *continued from page 4*



*Flying Act, pick your favorite*



*Has to be the Hanneford riding act*



*Showing off the new big top*



*Lion act, maybe one of Clyde Beatty's?*



## 2019 CFA Convention

September 25-28, 2019

Big E Fair

West Springfield MA

The Circus Fans Association of America is pleased to announce that it will hold its 2019 convention during the Big E Fair in West Springfield, Massachusetts from September 25<sup>th</sup>-September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019.



The Big E is one of the most picturesque, oldest and largest fairs in the United States. The centerpiece of the convention will be the world-class Big E Circus Spectacular! The convention will also include the traditional sales and “bull” rooms, several seminars and meetings, the annual banquet and an auction.

There will also be some special surprise events and free time for attendees to enjoy the fair itself.

Also note that discussions are on-going with the participating organizations to reschedule the Circus Summit for either 2020 or 2021. Details will be announced later this year.

Further details about the 2019 CFA convention, including hotel choices and registration fees, will be announced shortly in *The White Tops*, by “eblast” to CFA members, on the CFA website, and our Facebook page. **Save the dates!**

## Official Summit update

Circus Summit 2019, which was scheduled for July 9-13, 2019 at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield MA, has been postponed.

One of the major objectives of the Circus Summit is to include representatives from as many circus-related organizations as possible. Unfortunately, during the planning process, we discovered that there were unavoidable scheduling conflicts with some of the major organizations that wanted to participate in the Circus Summit. We also received requests from some participants that the next Circus Summit be held at a different location and time of the year.



Accordingly, to ensure the broadest possible participation in the Circus Summit, the Executive Committee will be reaching out to the many groups that have expressed an interest in a Circus Summit to discuss alternative dates and locations for the next Circus Summit.

Also note that, even though the

Circus Summit has been postponed, the Circus Fans Association is planning a regular CFA convention in 2019 (See above). Please watch *The White Tops*, the CFA website and Facebook page for further announcements about the Circus Summit as well as the 2019 CFA convention.

Thank you for your patience. We apologize for any inconvenience caused by this postponement.



# CFA News

## CFA officers elections

### Nominating petition on wrapper 1

For terms beginning May 1, 2019

Between now and December 31, CFA members may offer nominations for one president-elect, one vice-president and five trustees. A form for nominations appears on the wrapper page 1. You may use this form or a photocopy.

CFA officers are elected at large and do not represent a specific area. Trustees serve a four-year term and can serve multiple terms but must be placed on the ballot after each term. Candidates may nominate themselves or be placed in nomination by another CFA member.

All nominations must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2018.

Mail nominating petitions to

Tim Tegge

PO Box 661

Baraboo WI 53913-0661



## Report from the

### Circus Relations Committee

from Maxine House, Chair

We four members of the Circus Relations Committee continue to do what each of us has always done – attend as many circuses as possible! The more circuses we attend, the more we get to know the performers and staff of each show and therefore help them.

Unless we are specifically given comp tickets, we *always buy* tickets! We also buy something at the concession stand – be it a soda, popcorn or program. We like to get t-shirts, too. Without making a nuisance of ourselves, we visit in the backyard to get to know the circus folks better. I often bring homemade banana bread or a batch of brownies. A box of Duncan Donuts works, too. I've even been known to hand out old *White Tops*! We find that visits from fans make the day special for circus folk. They're eager to talk once they realize you're not looking for a hand out.

The performers and staff often have problems that we local fans can help solve – the location of doctors or repair shops for example, although the Internet has helped a lot on that score.

By word of mouth and even by letters to the editor, we fans can publicize circuses. Don Covington put it this way, “Advertising is extremely expensive and in today's world of targeted audiences, the goal is to reach the most likely ticket buyers in a way that connects to them personally. Here, local fans can provide some real benefit by advising the show about conflicting events, local celebrations, sensitivities and recent experiences that may affect the next show entering the area.” Right on, Don!

You personally might not be a member of the Circus Relations Committee, but you, too, can help strengthen the relationship between the CFA and the American circus industry. 📌





## THE CFA WORD

by Mort Gamble

Director of Public Relations/Media

"I get a fine warm feeling when I'm doing well, but that pleasure is pretty much negated by the pain of getting started each day," the novelist William Styron once stated. "Let's face it, writing is hell."

He also said on a talk show once that for him, writing a book (and I'm paraphrasing) was like traveling from Moscow to Vladivostok "on your knees."

I can relate to this. As my co-author Maureen Brunsdale and I work toward the halfway point of our forthcoming biography of Art Concello – I can't speak for her – but my knees are already pretty sore. And it's becoming harder and harder, as Styron put it, to get going each time I sit down at the keyboard.

Not that Concello is a boring subject. Is there anyone more fascinating in circus lore? The star flyer-turned-manager, who figured prominently in the circus business during some of its most critical years in America, was an enormously persuasive and powerful force, yet remains a mysterious figure who preferred to work behind the scenes.

The project is almost as daunting as climbing up onto a trapeze bar. (I did that once, and it was terrifying. No one had told me that even in a gentle breeze, the rigging swayed as the big top did.) There's the fear of not getting the facts right, or the narrative complete, or the reader fully engaged and intrigued, to keep turning the page. It's all been fun so far – a giant puzzle for which we're still finding pieces. Yet, like the circus itself, it stares at us critically, challenging us to come up with our next good act. How many miles beyond Moscow are we? And we've already logged



Art Concello

photo: *Pictorial History of the American Circus*

three years on our journey! Aren't we there yet?

Fortunately, the circus has always been my passion, and so writing about it is mostly pleasurable. Once I get going, Styron's "fine warm feeling" finds me, too. Back in 2003, I really got going on my doctoral dissertation and wrote it within two months, though I wouldn't recommend that tour de force to any graduate student. Serious motor control issues resulted.

I also have my ninth-grade

English teacher,

Jeanette Simms, and my eleventh-grade teacher, Linda Morgan, to thank for grounding me in grammar and punctuation. In those days, I was a rather timid student who considered that a dangling participle or misplaced modifier brought shame to the entire family. A split infinitive warranted the electric chair.

Maureen is an excellent researcher, and her writing and edits take the sprawling collection of interviews, secondary sources, articles, press releases, and other raw materials and distill them to key themes, transitions, conclusions, and additional questions and topics to ponder. She loves circus history and its many colorful characters, as I do. We make a great team.

So on to Vladivostok! Concello, of course, knew a thing or two about Russian circuses. All will be revealed in our book, so stay tuned. I hope that the late "Little Caesar" with his cigar would not mind our trespassing on his life and times... would, in fact, approve of our writing as being nothing less than the literary equivalent of the elusive triple somersault. Concello and his wife Antoinette performed the "killer trick" beautifully and often.

We hope to honor their lives with accuracy and respect; we want to get the writing right. 📌



Maureen Brunsdale

photo by David Orr



*Adler/Binder Tent hosts*

**Kelly Miller Circus at**

**Little Ferry NJ**

**June 16, 2018**

by Maxine House

Frank Vopasek, an Adler/Binder tent member, had booked the Kelly Miller date for the Little Ferry Hose Company #1. (See page 34.) This group had successfully sponsored circuses before, but this time they pulled out all the stops. Frank led the promotion complete with a large billboard on SR 46 and banners sold to local sponsors including the A/B Tent.

Frank and Maxine House are standing proudly behind his creation.

More on Wrapper page 4. 📌

photo by Paul Gutheil





# Circus Fans Association of America

## OFFICERS

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<circusjan@hotmail.com> 702-457-6561

**John Peters**, *President Elect*  
<jmpeters@bellsouth.net> 561-799-1733

**Timothy Noel Tegge**, *Vice President*  
<timothytegge@yahoo.com> 608-356-2375

**Gary C. Payne**, *Immediate Past President*  
<ptgcp@aol.com> 860-833-7925

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<bwazzan@yahoo.com> 702-262-6090

**Niles "Buddy" Calhoun** To 4/30/19  
<nilesca@aol.com> 601-366-4378

**Priscilla Johnson** To 4/30/21  
<circuswert@yahoo.com> 845-454-1860

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**Christine Schreiber** To 4/30/19  
<circusfarms@yahoo.com> 352-542-9993

**Herb Ueckert** To 4/30/19  
<circusartist@aol.com> 941-351-7138

**April Zink** To 4/30/19  
<aprilzink@aol.com> 352-262-3455

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<deptulascircus@centurytel.net> 440-897-4895

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<whitetops@midohio.twcbc.com>  
614-261-0454

**Mort Gamble** *Director of Public Relations*  
<mortgamble@gmail.com> 301-788-9015

**Fr. Richard Notter** *Chaplain*  
<ren132@aol.com> 419-351-9035

**Fred D. Pfening III** *Historian*  
<fppfening@pfening.com> 614-323-5361



## Secretary/Treasurer Notes

by Cheryl Deptula

I would like to say a **big thank you** to the 797 members who as of August 20<sup>th</sup> have paid their dues for May 1, 2018 through April 30, 2019. Many included additional monies noted for the General Fund, NCPS Fund, White Tops Fund and S/T Computer Fund. We have recognized these donations in each issue.

However, as of this date, 171 members remain **unpaid** and did/will not receive the July/August or future issues until their membership has been paid.

I mailed the original dues statement at the end of March. On July 15<sup>th</sup> I asked our Webmaster, Vanesa, to send an email blast to those unpaid members and I mailed via USPS a second notice to about 50 members. At that time 213 had not paid; therefore, 42 did bring their membership up-to-date and received the July/August issue of *The White Tops* via first class mail – an additional expense to CFA.

Membership Chair John Peters has started to contact the remaining unpaid members beginning August 17<sup>th</sup> – along with the assistance of President Jan Biggerstaff (which is not part of the duties of our president). Thank you, John and Jan!

This remains a recurring problem every year and it is difficult for me to understand "why" a couple hundred members must always be reminded of their CFA membership renewal. Perhaps someone has a solution to this problem. If so, please contact me at <deptulascircus@centurytel.net>. I will forward suggestions to the board.

Summer has almost ended and for those of us who live "up North", we look forward to the lovely fall colors as the trees begin to change. But winter gets longer, daylight shorter and colder every year – especially as we add another birthday.

Watch future issues of *The White Tops* and follow the CFA website – <www.circusfans.org> as well as Facebook for additional details on the 2019 CFA convention scheduled for September 25-28, 2019 in West Springfield, Massachusetts in conjunction with the Big E Fair. It will be great!

*Cheryl*

## New members

Carolina Dance Partners,  
#11699  
Attn: Paul Tagg  
PO Box 5741  
North Myrtle Beach SC  
29582

Franklin G. Boisvere, Jr.,  
#11698  
PO Box 292011  
Port Orange FL 32129

Kathleen Plothow,  
#11701  
115 W 5<sup>th</sup> St  
Peru IN 46970

Lyne DelMonte, #11702  
4411 Bee Ridge Rd, #725  
Sarasota FL 34233

Justin Loomis, #11703  
PO Box 1471  
Bushnell FL 33513

## Reinstated

Gary Emery, #9906  
707 Sanders Ave  
Scotia NY 12302

Mark G. Bayuk, #6548  
PO Box 270582  
St Paul MN 55127

## New address

James K. Judkins, #7560  
1909 Mango Circle  
Harlingen TX 78552

Jeannine Castro, #11372Y  
Sarasota FL 34240

John W. Vick, #3760  
Oak Park Place  
800 Waldo St, #3027  
Baraboo WI 53913

Michael E. McGuckin,  
#7993  
96 Merino Dr  
Huntsville TX 77340

## Donations

*A total of \$240 was  
donated by CFA members  
as listed below.*

**THANK YOU!**

**Chris G. Nahatis**  
Manchester-by-the-Sea  
MA  
To General Fund

**Chuck & Bambi Burnes**  
Anaheim CA  
To General Fund

**Niles "Buddy" Calhoun**  
Jackson MS  
To General Fund

**W. Bradd Tompkins**  
Lakeland FL  
To General Fund

**J. Lindsay Keffer**  
Denton TX  
To White Tops Fund





## Edith Johnston Memorial Trust

### 2018 Annual report

The Edith Johnston Memorial Trust received seven requests for grants in 2018. Trust earnings of \$4,038.00 were available for grants.

The applications were reviewed by the trust committee members: Jan Biggerstaff, Pat Stevenson, Douglas Kruest, Mort Gamble and Phil Krahn. Consensus was obtained to recommend to the CFA Board of Trustees that all requestors receive grants in the amounts listed below. The CFA Trustees approved this recommendation and funds were transferred to CFA Executive Secretary/Treasurer Cheryl Deptula to send checks to

Circus City Festival, Peru IN	\$600.00
Hamid Circus School, Egg Harbor Twp. NJ	\$500.00
French Lick West Baden Museum, French Lick IN	\$500.00
Wenatchee Youth Circus, Wenatchee WA	\$600.00
Circus Harmony, Florissant MO	\$600.00
Amazing Grace Circus, Nyack NJ	\$500.00
Circus and Travelling Shows	
Retirement Project, Inc. Sarasota, FL	\$600.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,900.00</b>

Since 2000 the trust has provided fifty-six grants totaling \$35,964.00. With the fiscal year's volatile market performance, our portfolio decreased \$2,368.18. The original bequest of approximately \$88,000.00 is now worth \$161,113.35 (April 30, 2018). Currently 21.67% of the portfolio is invested in U. S. Treasury Securities. Trust By-Laws require 20% to be in U. S. Treasury Securities.

The committee expresses our sincere appreciation to Charlotte Swann of Morgan Stanley, Howell MI, who has served as our financial advisor. Charlotte has retired and Catherine Daniel is our new Morgan Stanley financial advisor. We are confident Catherine will continue to guide us on our successful financial journey to prudently utilize the bequest to honor the late Edith Johnston. It is significant to note that Morgan Stanley has once again waived the annual account fee of \$175.00 for the trust.

The committee also expresses sincere appreciation to Cheryl Deptula, CFA Executive Secretary/Treasurer, who faithfully assists the committee in their communications with the CFA Trustees and issues the grant checks.

Jeanette Williams  
Sarasota FL  
To White Tops Fund

Melanie L. Aultman  
Gainesville FL  
To White Tops Fund

J. Lindsay Keffer  
Denton TX  
To S/T Computer Fund

Thanks also to Doug Kruest who has served on the committee for his four year term. His insight and thoughtful analyzing of the grant requests has been very helpful through each year.

Phil Krahn,  
*Trust Chairperson*  
Pat Pagel,  
*Trust Secretary/Treasurer*

#### LEGAL NOTICE EDITH JOHNSTON MEMORIAL TRUST FUND

<b>FISCAL YEAR 2018</b>			
(05-01-17 TO 04-30-18)			
<b>ASSETS</b>			
INVESTMENTS		\$156,131.13	
MMF		\$4,982.22	
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>			\$161,113.35
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
LIABILITIES		\$0.00	
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>			\$0.00
<b>EQUITY</b>			
UNRESTRICTED EQUITY		\$161,113.35	
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>			\$161,113.35
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>			\$161,113.35
<b>DISTRIBUTIONS</b>			
GRANTS		\$3,900.00	
MORGAN STANLEY SERVICE CHARGE		\$-	
EXPENSES		\$-	
<b>TOTAL DISTRIBUTIONS</b>			\$3,900.00
<b>VALUE OF INVESTMENTS</b>			
		End FY 2017	End FY 2018
U.S. TREASURIES		\$31,043.75	34,918.38
MONEY MARKET FUND		\$3,242.76	4,982.22
COMMON STOCK		\$129,195.02	121,212.75
<b>TOTAL</b>		\$163,481.53	161,113.35

From: John F. Palinkas Jr. <xxxxxx@aol.com>

Sent: Saturday August 4, 2018 4:31 PM

To: deptulascircus@centurytel.net

Subject:

I received the new White Tops today. I read the article about Cole All Star Citrcus (sic). I found a mistake in the article. It (was) found(ed) by James M. Cole of Penn Yan not James E. Cole.

John Palinkas



Poster for the James M. Cole Circus sent to us by John Palinkas.

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Lorain OH 44053-5004  
<deptulascircus@centurytel.net>

**Pin →**  
**← Patch**



\$5.00 each including postage

## Deadlines for White Tops

*Special Holiday Issue*  
Nov/Dec issue is Oct. 1, 2018

Jan/Feb issue is Dec. 17, 2018

You are invited to attend the  
**Annual Banquet**  
Bob Dover/Peggy Williams Tent #112  
Leonard Aylesworth Ring #2

November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in Palmyra PA (east of Hershey)

Guest Speaker: Randy Johansen  
Red Unit train crew, 1985-1991  
"Experience getting the GSOE to town on time!"

Details & contacts: Jim Rittle, <jbrittle3@comcast.net>  
Gene Mascioli: 717-350-2870

**ALWAYS A GREAT AFFAIR TO ATTEND!**

# SPECTACLE

AN ONLINE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS ARTS

Vol. VII, No. 5



Vol. VII No. 5  
Aug, 2018

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- Maïke Schulz's Photo Gallery of Kelly Miller Circus
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<whitetops@midohio.twcbc.com>

or mail to: The White Tops

40 Winthrop Rd • Columbus, OH 43214

Hello to all our Circus Pages followers.

After 28 wonderful seasons and the passing of our father José Pages, Sr., the family has decided 2018 will be our last year on the road as Circus Pages International.

We have raised four generations of circus talent, traveled across the United States and Canada, and made many life long friends along the way. Our lives have been enlightened by those encounters and will stay with our family forever.

Daisy and Bambi are loving life at the Memphis Zoo. Our kids, the next generation of Pages, are going to explore their options whether it be circus, school or just enjoying life.

For now we will enjoy family time with our mother, Sabina, and eagerly await our next adventures in life.

We wouldn't have been so successful without the help of so many of you. We'd like to thank the countless building and fair managers and board members for their continuous support and love throughout the years. We'd like to give a special shout out to Ian Kempf at the Eastern Michigan Fair for making us part of your family.

For now and always... May all your days be Circus Pages days!

## Another Wonderful Circus and Tradition to disappear

from Doug Kruest

It has been announced that Circus Pages have tragically gone out of business after over 28 wonderful years. The passing of their family patriarch last October, declining health of the matriarch, and the desire to peruse other adventures led to the decision to close the circus – not harassment by PETA or other extremists.

Circus Pages has appeared throughout the United States and Canada in conjunction with numerous community sponsors, civic organizations, schools and many non-profit organizations. Circus Pages is also one of the only US circuses with African elephants and white lions.

PETA and other extremist groups are celebrating and were planning to harass the Pages family to send their animals to “sanctuaries” – jokes on them. We are happy to say that their African elephants, Daisy and Bambi, both in their early 40s have been sent to the Memphis Zoo – a zoo with one of the largest African elephant habitats. Their big cats may be retiring to another Zoological facility in Tennessee. Their other animals are returning to their winter quarters in Florida.

It is so sad to see this amazing family, their animals and their traditional entertainment to come to an end and leave us. We are happy the animals will be in loving hands and not in the “care” of animal rights extremists!

The deadline is October 1<sup>st</sup>

## White Tops Holiday ads

Ads from CFA members and friends in the November/December *White Tops* are there to celebrate the holiday season with other circus fans and to help support our magazine financially.

Times are getting better. Several new circuses have formed, membership is up but commercial advertising remains down.

So it's still up to us, the CFA membership at large, to step up and help. Think about placing a “holiday greeting ad” in this year's November/December *White Tops*. Wish your fellow CFAers a happy holiday and help fund your magazine. The deadline is October 1, 2018 to give us time to create good ads.

Again this year, Mardi and I are donating our time and any costs to make-up all ads that members submit. You will only pay for the space and all the money will go to your *White Tops*.

## White Tops Rate Card

Page Size	Commercial	Member
Full	\$ 300.00	\$ 200.00
Half	\$ 165.00	\$ 110.00
Quarter	\$ 90.00	\$ 60.00
Eighth	\$ 50.00	\$ 35.00

White Tops editors Mardi and John Wells or artist Howard Pace will create your holiday ad. If you want to do your own, ads must be in CMYK color and PDF format. Call for assistance.

Member rates are only available to tents, tops and members for non-commercial messages. All other ads are at the commercial rate including members advertising products or services.

Frequency discount and other conditions may apply. See our website at <<http://qdxdesign.com/whitetops/whitetops.html>>.

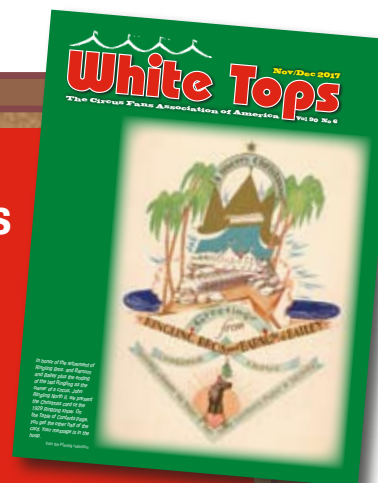
For more information or if you have questions, contact John & Mardi Wells: email to <[whitetops@midohio.twcbc.com](mailto:whitetops@midohio.twcbc.com)>; telephone 614-261-0454; or write to White Tops, 40 Winthrop Road, Columbus OH 43214.

**For commercial advertising** • Maxine House, email to <[mahouse@verizon.net](mailto:mahouse@verizon.net)> or telephone 201-723-6384.

**For members ads** • Barbara Moore at <[circuselephants@tds.net](mailto:circuselephants@tds.net)>; phone 207-841-7696; or write to White Tops, 53 Main St., Warren ME 04864.

## Physical specifications

Sizes	Horizontal - Vertical	Notes
Full page	7.75 x 10.00 inches	With no bleed
	8.50 x 11.00 inches	Full bleed
Half page	3.75 x 10.00 inches	
	7.75 x 4.85 inches	
Quarter page	3.75 x 4.85 inches	
	4.85 x 3.75 inches	
Eighth page	3.75 x 2.4 inches	
	2.4 x 3.75 inches	





**E. Regis Amend, Jr.**, age 80, passed away on April 28, 2018 in Uniontown PA. Rege was born on October 27, 1937 and except for a short stint in the military, spent his whole life in Uniontown. He graduated from the Chicago School of Watchmaking and was the owner of Amend's Jewelry, Hobbyland USA, and Amend's Enterprises at the Uniontown Mall where he hosted model gatherings over the years. Rege will always be remembered for his famous lemonade and sausage stand at the Fayette County Fair.



Rege is survived by his wife and best friend of 57 years, Barbara (Mangello) Amend; children Christa Amend Kuhn, Edward R. Amend, William D. Amend; brother George J. Amend; their wives and families and many friends who shared his love for the circus. He was an active member of the Terrell Jacobs Ring and Dennis Gilli Tent, the Circus Historical Society, and Circus Fans Association.

Regis had an early fascination with the circus and would talk his older brother George into driving anywhere in the area to see a show. He built a complete miniature circus that he displayed across Western Pennsylvania for many years and had to wait a couple of years until he was old enough to join the Circus Model Builders and get member number 790. Rege liked the circus so much he named his first born after Christiana Bros. Christa Ann was as close as he could come. He would always be working on something on the kitchen table or planning on a new exhibit with long time friend Dennis Gilli who often parked his trailer in Rege's back yard.

Regis will always be remembered as a wonderful story teller and a great friend to all he met. His colorful tombstone with pictures of a clown, elephant and big top said it all: "May all your days be circus days!"

from Wylie Irwin

**Doris Arndt**, whose ability to command big cats and bears made her one of Europe's best-known circus animal trainers in the 1950s and '60s, a time when men dominated such acts, died on June 21 in Berlin. She was 88.



Ms. Arndt was only 17 when she made her debut, topping the bill of Berlin's Circus Barlay as "Lola the Youngest Tiger Bride." But what drew crowds from all over Europe was her act with a troupe of polar bears, which she trained to leap over her head and balance on a tiered arch as she hung from a swing.

"I love animals," she told the German daily newspaper *Berliner Zeitung* in 2014. "They are the reason I joined the circus."

She joined Circus Krone in 1954 in Munich, where she and her first husband, Alfons Arndt, who also trained animals, perfected an act in which a troupe of polar bears would drink from bottles and balance on balls and pedestals.

After the marriage ended in divorce, she continued the act on her own, adding three polar bears, which she trained after they were captured in the wild as cubs. That brought the number of bears in the act to 12.

The following December, she appeared in Tom Arnold's Harringay Circus in England, wearing a fur-trimmed Nordic-style minidress and ankle boots in an act called "Doris Arndt and Munich's 12 Polar Bears, Veritable Arctic Giants". The *Illustrated London News* that year said she was the only female polar bear trainer in the world.

Her bears also made a Hollywood appearance in 1961, in *The Big Show*, a feature film about a European circus family. Reviewing the film for *The New York Times*, Howard Thompson noted, "The polar bear act is fascinating".

Circus Krone sold the bears at the end of the season that year, and Ms. Arndt returned to performing with big cats,

training a troupe of four lions and four tigers. Her final season, with the Circo Medrano in Italy, proved to be her toughest, as she struggled to stretch her own salary to pay for food to maintain her animals.

Later in life, as concerns about animal



rights led more circuses to drop wild animal acts from their shows, Ms. Arndt was often quoted as an expert in the news media.

In 2007, when Germany fawned over the Berlin Zoo's baby polar bear, Knut, she refuted a claim by his trainer that the cub had smiled at him. "Polar bears don't make faces; they have only three black points, whether they are playing or they are angry," she told the Berlin newspaper *Tagesspiegel*, referring to their black eyes and nose.

Indeed, a polar bear is not to be trifled with, she said. When confronted with another creature, it immediately senses whether it is stronger and may do harm if it feels threatened.

She recalled how a bear had injured her young son, who had wandered into their enclosure. "A polar bear will destroy anything that is weak," she said.

Doris Kielblock was born on May 7, 1930, in Berlin. As a child she smuggled frogs into her bed at night and boasted that she would approach savage dogs without fear.

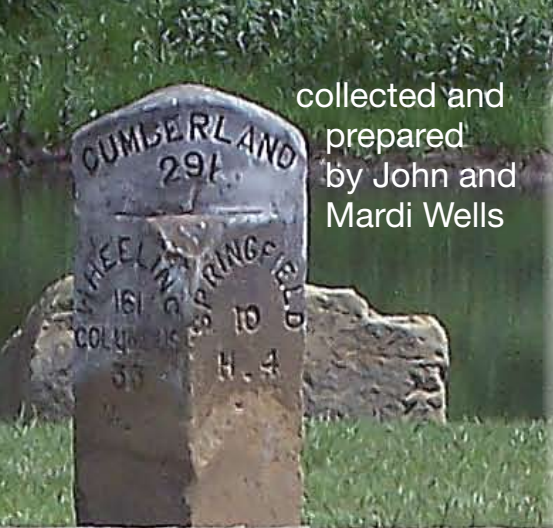
At 16 she started an apprenticeship to the circus animal trainer Josef Wiesner, who immediately recognized her talent. She made her debut in the circus ring in 1947.

Her son, Michael Arndt, survives her, as do a daughter, Rosedore Schmidt, from her second marriage, to Martin Schaaff, a Lutheran pastor, and two grandchildren. Mr. Schaaff died in 2015.

Though Ms. Arndt stopped performing in 1963, she and Mr. Schaaff, who was also fascinated with the circus, kept an archive of posters and other memorabilia in their Berlin home and were honored as special guests whenever the Circus Krone came to town.

In an interview with *Berliner Zeitung* in





collected and prepared by John and Mardi Wells

## Mileposts

2014, Mr. Schaaff recalled the first time he saw the woman he would marry. She was standing in the circus ring surrounded by a dozen towering white bears.

"I was fascinated by her courage and her presence," he said.

from Melissa Eddy

**Rosa Bouglione**, the matriarch of France's legendary Bouglione circus family, has died in Paris at age 107.



"Right up to August 26 she remained the uncontested queen of the circus," a family statement said.

Bouglione reigned over the Cirque d'Hiver (Winter Circus) in the heart of the French capital through most of the 20<sup>th</sup>

Century after her husband Joseph and his three brothers bought the famed venue in 1934.

"Madame Rosa received the greatest stars and welcomed the greatest international artists to this temple of the circus," the statement added.

Born in a horse-drawn caravan to a family of performers in Belgium on December 21, 1910, under the name Rosalie Van Been, Bouglione died on August 26 at her home close to the Cirque

d'Hiver, in eastern Paris.

In her extraordinary life story published in 2011, she told of how she was married in a lion's den.

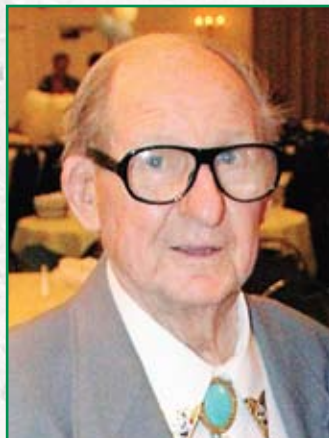
"Five generations, covering 55 children, great and great, great grandchildren will say adieu to their emblematic grandmother who has bequeathed them a love of the circus," the statement said.

Members of the public paid their respects before the coffin at the Cirque d'Hiver ahead of a funeral mass.

Rosa will be buried alongside "all the members of the dynasty" at the cemetery in Lizy-sur-Ourcq, northwest of Paris, the family said.

from circus fan Barry

**Henry Bush** died August 31 and will be remembered for his diligence in working with CFA and being at almost every CFA convention during his life, serving as



Sargent-at-Arms. He belonged to several CFA tents and served in Sarasota as president for two years. He also was well known

in later years for working with the Roberts Bros. Circus at the front door and for his companionship with Doris Earl who owned the circus. Together they drove to every possible circus activity. He was the "Pretzel Man" who brought pretzels to every meeting, convention and to every show he attended.

He passed away at age 91 after a short illness. Jeanette Rix had taken him to his doctor for an appointment but he was then rushed to St. Luke's Hospital by ambulance as he had pneumonia according to the doctor. There were other issues which they were checking when he passed. His arrangements were made by Gendron Funeral Home in Sarasota and he will be buried at the Sarasota Military Cemetery. Specific information is not yet available.

Thanks to Jeanette and Tammy for the supporting information about Henry and his passing.

from Pete Adams with photo by Paul Guthell

**Barbara Jones Harrell**, 90, passed away on August 7, 2018 in Kill Devil Hills NC. She was born on August 28, 1927 to the late Norman and Anna Houchins Jones. Growing up in Ocean View, Barbara enjoyed spending her time at the beach. Since 1941, she was a member of Miles United Methodist Church and she



truly lived her faith. Barbara was very talented musically, playing both organ and piano for many local churches, being a choir director, and teaching music education to

elementary public schools. She was active in several organizations including: Christian Women's Club, Christian Business & Professional Women, Association of Education of Office Professionals, Tidewater Chapter of American Guild of Organist, and the Circus Fans Association of America. Barbara and her daughter Nancy were huge circus fans. Another passion of hers was traveling all over the world.

She was preceded in death by her daughter, Nancy Harrell. Left to cherish her memory are her son, Norman Thomas Harrell, and his wife Laura; and dear cousin, Dr. N. Thomas Connally and his wife Judy.

Burial will be in Forest Lawn Cemetery. You may offer condolences to the family at <[www.smithandwilliamskempville.com](http://www.smithandwilliamskempville.com)>.

from son Norman Harrell

**David C. Merrifield** ("The Flying Merrifield") passed July 22 in Sarasota, Florida at the age of 81.

Internationally known for originating his helicopter trapeze act in the early 1960s, David Merrifield spent 37 years performing his act to the delight of audiences around the world. Freshly graduated from Trinity College in Connecticut in 1963 having majored in English, David moved to Sarasota where he developed his trapeze act.

Utilizing a piloted Bell-47-G2 open-

**Mileposts** tributes on page 14



cockpit helicopter, David performed at an altitude of 100 to 400 feet in the air. While others have tried to emulate his death-defying act, he was the only one who successfully did it without any safety wires or harnesses. Having spent more time hanging outside of an aircraft than any other human, David was the subject of a long-term NASA Space Flight Study.



During his career, David opened for a variety of major international shows including Johnny Carson, Phil Collins, Liberace, and Evil Knievel; performed live on *The Ed Sullivan Show*; and stumped panelists and audiences on *What's My Line* and *To Tell the Truth*.

Beginning in 1979 he was joined on the road by Howard Cowdrick, his partner and spouse of 39 years, who was at his side when David died peacefully in his sleep at their home in Sarasota after a seven-year battle with Parkinson's Disease. David and Howard were the nearly 20 year owners of Sho-PROS, an entertainment production coordinating company that facilitated hundreds of major musical performances at state fairs around the U.S.

from Jeff Merrifield

**Tim Orris** has died. He was the Senior Marketing Director for Cirque Italia and had been doing a similar job with Cole Bros. Circus previously.

No further Information is yet known.

from Pete Adams

**Karen Sue Peart Pugh** passed away July 17, 2018, following a short battle with brain cancer, at the age of 75. She was born August 14, 1942 in Cushing OK to Horace and Gladys (Galloway) Peart. Together with her parents, brother, Jerry and sister Sarah, they moved to Wenatchee in 1945.



She graduated from Wenatchee High School in 1961 and married Martin Day in 1963. They had two children, Darcy and Terry.

Karen married Paul Pugh on October 1975. They had 41 years together until Paul's death on January 30, 2016. During their years together, they traveled extensively to 17 countries and many parts of the United States. To quote Karen, "I have been blessed to travel the world with husband Paul."

She began her career and banking at Sea First Bank in 1965. Later the name changed to Bank of America and she retired after 35 years in 2000.

Subsequent to her retirement from banking, she worked seven years at the Senior Center and Shopko. She then decided on a third career in volunteer work. She volunteered at Wenatchee High School (usher), Riverwest Retirement, The Performing Arts Center and the Museum. She was a member of the Heritage Society and was selected "Volunteer of the Year" in 2017. Karen was an active member of First United Methodist Church.

Karen lived in Wenatchee, Washington and was an active circus fan and a supporter of the Wenatchee Youth Circus that her husband Paul, who predeceased, her had founded. For many years Paul and Karen came to the CFA conventions.

Karen is survived by her daughter, Darcy Day; sister, Sarah Peart; stepsons: Jon (Kathy) Pugh, David (Connie) Pugh; and stepdaughter, Margie (Rod) Heckleman. She was preceded in death by her husband, Paul; son, Terry; brother, Jerry; and her parents.

A Celebration of Life was held July 25 at the First United Methodist Church in Wenatchee. You are invited to view her online tribute at <www.



HeritageMemorialChapel.com> to share a memory or leave a comment. Those who wish to make a memorial donation can mail to Paul and Karen Pugh Scholarship Fund at the NCW Community Foundation, 9 S. Wenatchee Ave., Wenatchee WA 98801.

from Maxine House

**Robert J. Ullery**, CFA #9240, died August 16, 2018 in Arlington VA. No other information could be found.

**Tammy Wallenda Anderson**

dies at age 53. Mauled twice by tigers and barely escaping death when an improperly secured

aerial pole fell on her, the granddaughter of circus superstar Karl Wallenda had been hoping to revive her lion-tamer career for

the past decade. Instead, sometime early August 14, Tammy Wallenda died quietly in her sleep at age 53.

Once known as the Jungle Princess for her ability to command as many as 10 big cats in the ring at one time, Wallenda died of an apparent heart attack in the bedroom of her home in Sarasota.

"It was a shock to me, it's devastating," said wirewalker Blake Wallenda, one of Tammy's four children. "She had a tough life, and she made some wrong decisions, but she always managed to get herself out of it. And I think my moral compass, to always do my best in whatever I choose to do, came from her."

A longtime smoker, Tammy's destiny with white-knuckle performance art was set from the outset. She was born to Karl's equestrian daughter Jenny and aerialist Andy Anderson, who survived Karl's catastrophic seven-person pyramid collapse





collected and prepared by John and Mardi Wells

## Mileposts



in Detroit that killed two others in 1962.

The Wallenda clan, which arrived in Sarasota in 1928 and put down stakes at Arlington Street, treated circus animals as family members. Jenny's stepfather, veterinarian J. Y. "Doc" Henderson, owned a leopard named Sweetheart, who prowled the home like a house cat.

"She was around animals all the time, so it was only natural that she would be an animal lover," said lifelong family friend Kay Rosaire, who runs Big Cat Habitat & Gulf Coast Sanctuary in east Sarasota. "She had a deep affection for animals, and that's something the animal rights people don't understand, the bonds between animals and people."

For some 25 years, according to Blake, his mother toured the country demonstrating her skills with feline carnivores, a profession she once attempted to hide from mother Jenny, who pegged Tammy as a high-wire act.

Tammy's luck nearly ran out in 1997, when she was jumped by a 650-pound Siberian tiger named Marley in Dodge City, Kansas, during training. Its sellers failed to mention that Marley had killed its previous owner. Tammy was shaken "like a rag doll" before punching her way out of Marley's mouth. Although the attack

left her with a broken nose and 67 staples following seven hours of leg surgery, she returned to the ring undeterred.

Blake said his mom last performed in 2007, but liability issues, expenses and paperwork kept her from reliving her dream.

Blake, however, said his mother – who lived in a home once owned by her uncle Mario, wheelchair-bound after taking a career-ending fall during the 1962 Detroit accident – would never have wanted to meet her end in a blur of claws and incisors.

"I think she went the way she wanted to go," he said.

Tammy Wallenda is also survived by children Erika, Quentin and Zorayah. She also has grandchildren Curah, Arabela, Freyah, Jacob, and Malachi, as well as half-siblings Tino Wallenda and Delilah Troffer.

A celebration of life was held at Big Cat Habitat and Blake Wallenda says another gathering will be held at Showfolks of Sarasota.

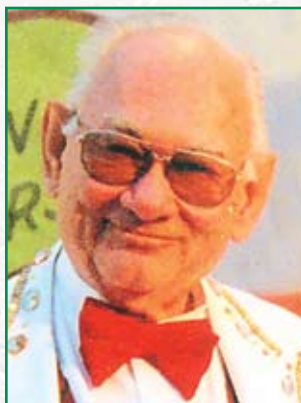
from *Herald Tribune* article sent in by Pete Adams

**Ward Hall** spent more than 72 years in show business. That's almost three-quarters of a century.

His incredible career took him around the world five times, and to every type of performing venue known to man.

Ward worked everywhere from circus big tops to the stage of Carnegie Hall. He made his living as a magician, clown, ventriloquist, juggler, fire-eater, movie actor, author, composer, singer, touring show producer, and presenter of "strange attractions". *Life* magazine once called him, "The Ziegfeld of the Cornfield". And, anybody who ever met Ward could easily tell that he had loved every minute of it.

When Ward passed away August 31 at age 88, it truly marked the end of a sometimes forgotten era in American entertainment. A time when show business was damn hard work. A life in "the business" meant spending years criss-crossing the country, playing every



backwater town on the map. Thousands of miles by train, truck and bus. Bad roads, lousy food and rotten pay. As a teenager who literally ran away to join the circus, Ward found his calling. He made show business his life's work, and never wanted or attempted to do anything else.

Older performers welcomed him, and taught him the circus and sideshow business. He then spent the next 70 years repaying the debt he felt he owed to those mentors, passing on his skills and knowledge to several generations of young performers. After a lifetime of accolades, awards and acclaim, he always thought his real legacy was the show he would leave behind, in the care of younger performers he had helped teach.

In very real ways, Ward always treated me like family. That family also includes scores of others, to whom he was just as kind, just as generous, and just as encouraging. His loss is a significant one to all of us. I'll always be thankful for the time I spent with him over the last decade or two. His advice, support, and just plain friendship helped me more than he ever knew.

In a lot of ways, Ward was still just a kid from Nebraska, whose fascination for show business and show people never left him. A self-made man, he rose to the top of the only business he ever wanted to be in. A guy who, at 88, could still hold an audience in the palm of his hand using only the sound of his voice...and his imagination. I'll miss his endless enthusiasm. I'll miss his stories. I'll even miss his singing. There will never be another like him.

"World of Wonders", the sideshow Ward Hall started more than 50 years ago, opened on time Friday evening at the Cumberland County Fair in Fayetteville, North Carolina. After all, "the show must go on". Ward would have been proud of that. In fact, he would have expected it.

by Bill Carter from CFA website, photos from Paul Gutheil





## To speak or not to speak

The world of the circus is mostly wordless. This makes it an international treasure of all the nations. Also, it is a great relief for performers to travel around the world and do the work everybody can understand.

Already in the beginning of my circus career, I made a different choice. I built my comedy act with verbal humor. This has made my work look like me and I have been able to use my skills with voices and ventriloquism. But using my voice has also caused me a lot of troubles and extra work.

As a young lad I started my career in the circus as a clown. I worked in my home country, so I just wanted to make people laugh by jokes. That fit my style. Even the other clowns often worked without the words. My small country – Finland – has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, due to historical events.

So already in my first year, I faced the challenge to learn my jokes in Swedish, too. But this was not enough, because much of the verbal comedy loses its meaning when translated into another

language. To keep my work in the ring, I needed to take a few steps back and make things happen without words. I learned how important it was to start preparing for the season very early and find out what jokes I can use in different countries and what jokes I cannot.

I had a Swedish talking grandmother and she was my first help with language. Her lessons I have found very important when I started to work internationally. I always find a person who knows the language and culture. Then I go through my act step by step. I find the parts that might not work. I change or remove them. I try to find small bits of the culture of the country I am visiting and use them



photo by Mira <CircusPhoto.fi>



*Working on Kelly Miller in 2015, I would make adjustments to my comedy to fit local audience participation.*

photo by John Wells

in my act. This might be a song, a joke or phrase that local people use.

The biggest job I will have is, of course, to learn the language I need. For some reason I have been lucky to learn new languages quite easily. Today I have been working my act in eight languages.

There is much I can do in advance. But then it is the time to perform in the new country. The first show is always a disaster inside my head. But it is a very important disaster because this embarrassment forces me to take my act in parts and built it again. This takes a couple of sleepless nights, but it is worth it.

Until now I have had success in every country I visited with an act full of words and verbal comedy. This has been especially challenging in China where the language is not very easy. Coming to work with the Kelly Miller Circus in the U.S. in 2015 was a nice challenge. The language was familiar, because I grew up with ALF from Melmac and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. All the children in Finland hear English in TV and we learn it in school. The challenge was the American humor. Your country has the most developed culture of verbal comedy with precise words and timing. People in the U.S. have learned what good comedy sounds like when it is done well. I really needed to work hard to find my way to make people laugh with my ventriloquist act. Also, between states I found it important to change small bits to make it good. I do hope I made my work good there.

Years have gone fast. Soon I will have been working 20 years in the circus. The years have been good and educational. Now I am the ringmaster, so I still do talk in the ring, maybe more than ever before. Everyday I step into the ring I do feel the same magic I felt as a child when I saw the show. And as long that magic of real circus exists, I think I will stay here and let my voice entertain. 🇫🇮



*The act today in Finland*

photo by Mira <CircusPhoto.fi>



## 10 steps to creating A great circus act!

by Zoe Fanning

American Youth Circus Organization's Teen Hup Squad

For many of us youth who do circus arts, the majority of our time is spent training and building strength, so when it's time to create an act it can be difficult to know where to start. Here is my ten-step process for piece creation. It's made up from my perspective as an aerialist, tips from my favorite coaches, and lessons I've learned through trial and error. While it works for me, it might not be just right for you, so feel free to blend it with your own creativity and experiences and advice from your favorite coaches and mentors.

### 1. Document Your Training:

This step comes before you even know you need to create an act! Building skill sets and strength is important. But spend some training time just messing around with your apparatus or props. Try to just flow for a few minutes and **make sure to film it!** Filming

this creative time will allow you to look back on it and keep skills or pathways that you think are pretty or pleasing. Filming also helps you to see how fluid your transitions are and where you can improve. You may also want to purchase a training notebook and write down these sequences so you can delete some footage from your camera.

**2. Evaluate the Mood and Character of the Event:** When you are asked to perform, think about the purpose and tone of the event. Is it a party? A fundraiser? Is there a theme? Who will be in the audience? What is the venue like? Write down any information and thoughts you have about the event in your training notebook.

**3. Pick Music to Set a Mood:** Look back at your event evaluation. If there is a theme, such as Halloween, then pick something spooky or foreboding, and not a feel good pop tune. If there is no particular theme but you know the event is an elementary school fundraiser, there are probably going to be a lot of kids, so choose a song with family friendly lyrics. Finally, think about what you want to do. Do you want to do a fast-paced piece or something slower? How do you want the audience to feel during your piece?



Taking all these things into consideration will help you choose music that fits your goals as well as the mood and character of the event.

**4. String Together Sequences:** Using sequences you saved from training documentation and your music, start stringing together sections you like. Use the music to help you find out what goes where. If there is a speed up in the music, maybe choose an easier sequence and save more difficult moves for a slower section. Remember to think about your personal strengths and what you can do safely and beautifully. Also consider the space you will be working in before you add large moves like swinging, orbiting or spinning.

**5. Do It Through a Few Times:** Look for timing weirdness, awkward moments, and places that are difficult or things that you just plain don't like. If possible film it and mark these moments in your notes so you can remember them.

**6. Revise and Polish:** Use your film and notes to find the parts of your act that are the most rough, unpolished or difficult. Make

your revisions and do the piece again. Film it so that you can look at it later, and repeat Step 6 as needed! I usually do separate "revise and polishes" for tricks, any music cues, and cleaning up transitions.

### 7. Make It Shine:

Film the last iteration of your piece and pay attention to small details such as facial expressions, hands, toes, or any frilly fancy bits. Go back to Step 3 and ask yourself, "Does this fit my character/mood? Is there something I

should change so this more accurately transmits the mood or theme?"

**8. Pick a Costume:** Although it's not the most important part of a piece, a costume that makes you feel super secure and confident is a real benefit. When considering a costume also consider lighting, the color of your background, the mood of your piece, and the event. Once you have it, do the piece a few more times to make sure the costume fits well and helps you feel confident on stage.

**9. Repeat, Repeat, Repeat:** In the days leading up to your performance try to do your piece a few extra times in full costume and with music if possible. This can help reassure you that you know what you are doing and that you look great!

**10. Mark Through the Final Minutes:** Before you go on stage, mark through your piece at least twice on the ground. "Marking through" means to move as though you are on your apparatus. This helps jog your memory of the act. Right before you go on stage, take a few deep breaths and stand confidently. Then, get out there and show 'em what you got! 📌

# CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

# CRYSTAL

text and photos by Richard Czina



Crystal, the forty-second production from Cirque du Soleil, is its first show done on ice. We saw the performance on July 15, 2018, at the Germain Ice Arena in Ft. Myers, Florida.

The show is a mixture of ice skating, circus performance and drama. The story centers around performer Crystal, whom we follow in the show in “an exhilarating tale of self-discovery as she dives into a world of her own imagination.” The performers mix world class skating skill with circus performance all on and above the ice stage. In one segment “Crystal sees her reflection skating upside down on the ➡



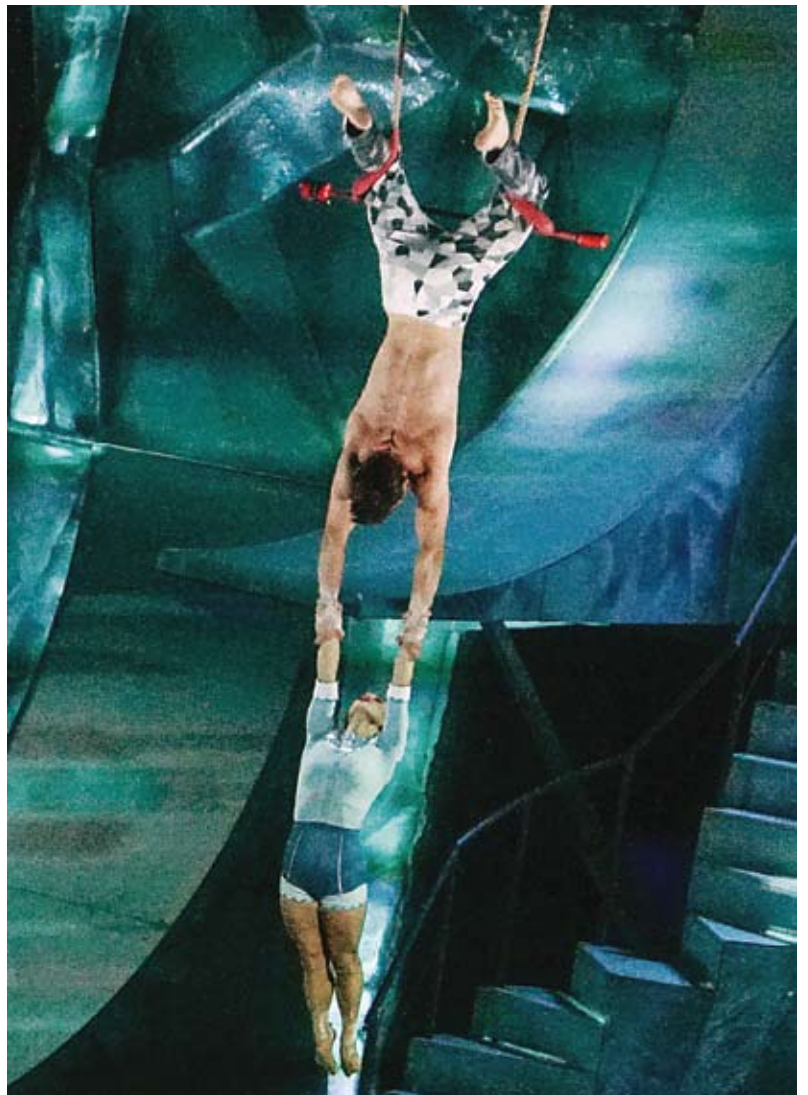












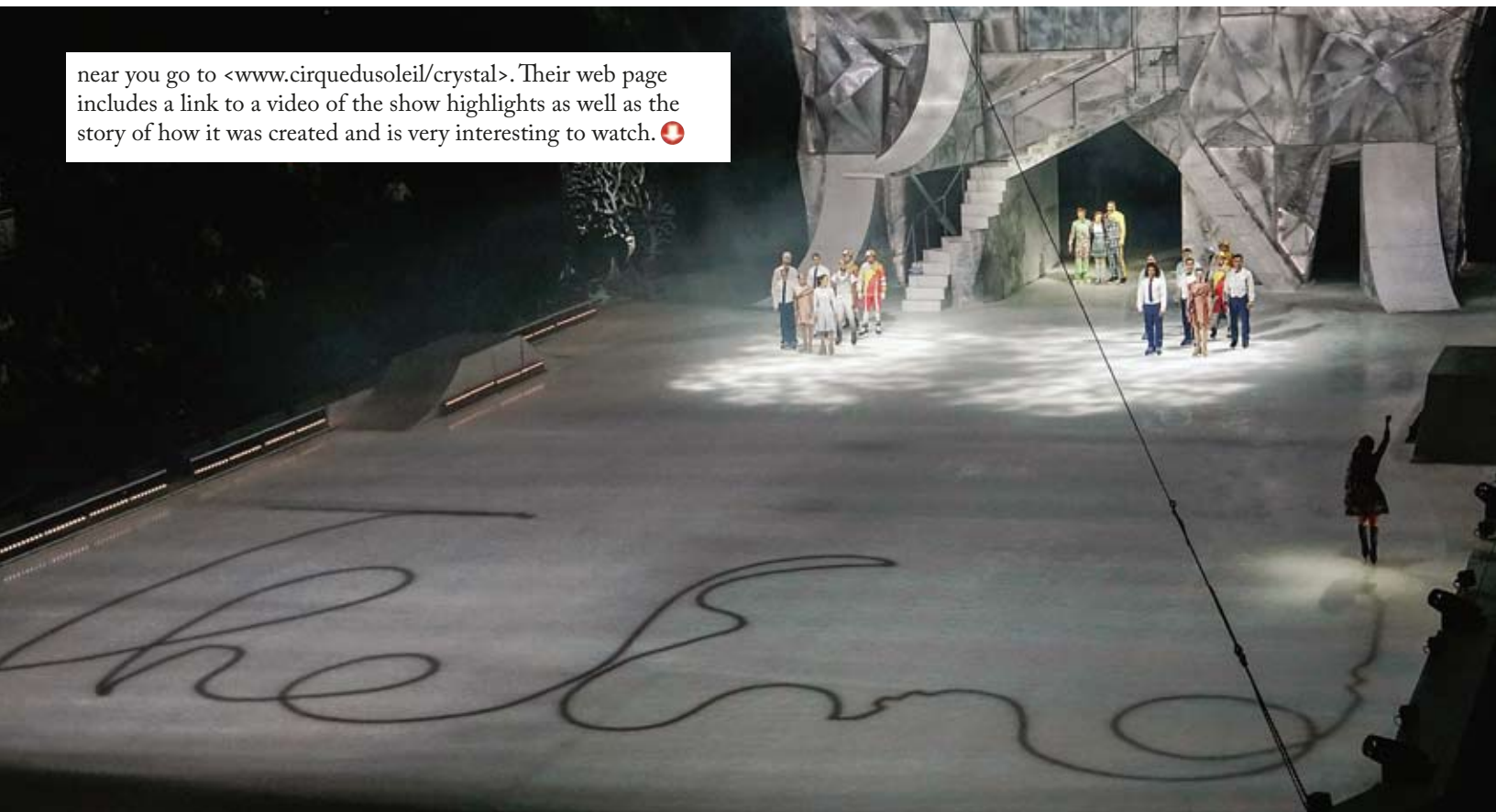
ceiling. She then joins her on the ice in a poetic skating duo.” Later in “playground a hockey game on a pond turns into a hi-octane romp on the ramps where extreme skaters do flips, twists, and jumps at breakneck speeds until the ice turns into a giant pinball machine.” In the “ballroom sequence a couple perform a pas de deux on both the ice and in the air on straps”. Other moments mixed hand balancing, juggling and acrobatic routines with their skating.

Crystal is on the road stopping at ice arenas throughout the United States for the remainder of the year. For a venue ➡





near you go to [www.cirquedusoleil/crystal](http://www.cirquedusoleil/crystal). Their web page includes a link to a video of the show highlights as well as the story of how it was created and is very interesting to watch. 🇨🇦





# *Circus Unites Children from the Heartland and an Island for One Inspiring Tour*



text and photos by Jessica Hentoff

*Waterfall pyramid in rainforest*

Circus Harmony, St. Louis' only social circus organization, has been using circus arts to bring hope and motivate social change since 2001. Through its Peace Through Pyramids program, the organization has worked toward building bridges between communities in the St. Louis area and around the world by uniting children through circus arts. After successful Peace Through

Pyramids collaborations in Ferguson and Israel, Circus Harmony partnered with The National School of Circus of Puerto Rico (ENCPR) for the Revolution for Harmony Circus Tour on Puerto Rico from July 3-17, 2018.

Nine St. Louis Arches, our director, Jessica Hentoff, two coaches who are St. Louis Arches alums and an embedded reporter from *The St. Louis American* joined nine members of the Revolution 🇺🇸



*Peace Through Pyramids in Puerto Rico on first day*



*Hoops in Yabucoa*





*Hand to hand in Vieques*



*Hoop dive in Vieques*

Circus, the social circus troupe of the National Circus School of Puerto Rico. Along with three of their coaches, their social worker and Brazilian social circus practitioner, we formed the Revolution for Harmony Circus Tour. We brought the joy and inspiration of the circus to the towns of Adjuntas, San Juan, Yabucoa, Comerio, Dorado, and Vieques.

Our children bonded quickly with their Puerto Rican counterparts. At their first lunch break, they were dancing salsa together! Some of their kids spoke English and some of ours made good use of their high school Spanish. All spoke circus! Together they created unicycle, contortion, diabolo and hula hoop acts plus an 18 person partner acrobatic finale.



*Passing leap in Adjuntas*





*Three high in Adjuntas*



*Unicycle juggling in Adjuntas*



*Unicycle in Vieques*

With the exception of our show in Old San Juan, the places we played were chosen because they had been among those hardest hit and least restored from the hurricane. Many of the people in these towns felt abandoned by authorities and some people still did not have electricity or actual roofs for their homes! We often found ourselves driving on streets that had no working street lights. Even in the relatively good neighborhood where we stayed, there were houses that were destroyed by Maria and left vacant.

In the isolated town of Comerio, high up in the mountains of Puerto Rico, an artist-activist named Edgardo Larregui Rodriguez, told us that he believes that public art experiences like we brought there where we bring the art into the neighborhood are a necessary part of building community. "Art is what unites us in our community," he said. "It is an activation of the abandoned spaces. It's an action of reclaiming community. It's not just drawing, or painting, or making sculptures, but a vision of community, of uniting people to make public spaces better." In Circus Harmony's opinion, circus is the perfect vision of community that makes everything better! 🍷



# Circo Hermanos Vázquez

text by Maxine House & photos by JP Cunningham



*Opening*



*Raul Tovar*



*(L-R) Peter Peter, Tin Tin, Pedro Petro*

Circo Hermanos Vázquez endured a 94 degree day in “Hotlanta,” GA, for a three-pack performance day Saturday July 27, 2018. Its traditional pink and pale blue tent was clearly visible on the large parking lot of the Fiesta Mall, a popular shopping complex of the Hispanic population living nearby. The show has played there for many years, so it is a common sight. Posters and kiddie tickets inside of the mall were further enticements to attend the show. Both performances we saw were well attended in the air conditioned tent.





Alexa Vázquez



Bingo troupe



Aldo Vázquez

We saw two identical performances that day:

- Jan Vázquez gave the opening welcome in Spanish backed by seven dancing girls and a male acrobat, members of the Bingo troupe. Using a unicycle, large rings and a tall pole, they got the show off to a flashy start.
- A farm animal act with a pig, two ponies and a goat followed. In farm garb, Raul Tovar, who grew up on the circus, conducted a liberty act. Children dressed in bib overalls served as his prop hands. Artistic Director Glen Nicolodi told us that Valentina Vázquez, Mia Vázquez, Franco Vázquez, Emiliano Vázquez, and James Nicolodi serve in that role at various times. ➡



Leo Garcia





*Wheeler Nicolodi*



*Bingo troupe*



*Duo A & A*

- Musical clowns – The Campa family (Pedro Petro, the grandfather; Peter Peter, the father; and Tin Tin, the son) are the same clown act as last season. The audience loved them – including their collapsing bench routine.
- Alexa Vázquez performed a pleasing routine on an aerial pole and strap.
- Three women from the Bingo troupe did a hand balancing act. This Ukrainian group has been with the show for three seasons, but with changing membership. These three performed a difficult sequence of tricks.
- Pedro Petro returned to do the ever favorite routine of asking children volunteers from the audience to reply “cacahuete” (“peanut”) to anything he asked. Of course, he tricked most of them to answer his questions with a “Si” or some other phrase. The audience loved it.
- Aldo Vázquez led two black and one white horse through a series of maneuvers including jumping in and out of three large rings in time to the music.

A 20 minute intermission - In the ring, photo ops with either a pony or a pig in a tractor; in the lobby, a chance to sample the many food offerings.

- Leo Garcia performed as the “Human Cannonball.” He was shot from the front of the tent to a large air cushion in the center ring.



- Wheeler Nicolodi and his rat-like puppet reprised an act similar to the one he did on the Big Apple Circus some years ago. Having stuffed the puppet in a trash can, Nicolodi then chose two men and a woman from the audience. In an amusing routine of having them lip synch, Nicolodi provided a humorous dialogue and sang *O Sola Mio*. This act always goes over well.
- Two females from the Bingo troupe presented an excellent strap act with many difficult maneuvers. The Russian classical music added a lot to the drama of the act.
- The three clowns with the help of Jan Vázquez as their film director and a volunteer “actor” from the audience enact a robber/murder scene. Audience participation always adds to an act.
- Duo A & A (Adam and Antoine) end the performance with their unbelievably difficult balancing act. It is so challenging

that in the final performance of the day they couldn't hold one of the poses. They redid the trick for a standing ovation!

- A 6-piece band accompanied the show, assisted by some tapes: trumpet, trombone, saxophone, electric guitar, electric base and drums.

Vázquez family members were very much in evidence in the ring: Jan and Memo did some of the announcing. Alexa had her own aerial act. Aldo presented the horses. Mia, Franco, Emiliano, Valentina, even young Aldo Jr. played cameo roles in the performance. This is truly Circo Vázquez!

Headquartered in Donna TX, Circo Vázquez currently has only one unit on the road and none operating in Mexico. The tent, new in 2014, still appeared to be in good shape. On a visit to Circo Hermanos Vázquez one can enjoy the experience of old time circus.

We wish to thank Glen Nicolodi for his gracious hospitality during our visit to the show. 📍



Memo Vázquez



Alexa, Jan, & Aldo Vázquez Jr.



# Baraboo's Big Top Parade and Circus Celebration

text and photos by Dave Lorbeske

*Parade passes the Al. Ringling Mansion.*

The 6<sup>th</sup> annual Big Top Circus Parade on Saturday morning, July 21, highlighted Baraboo's celebration of everything circus. The parade had 95 units including 15 of Circus World's historic circus wagons, marching bands, stilt walkers, jugglers, clowns, Morgan horses, snakes, kangaroos, a giraffe and three elephants. The crowd that lined the parade route tripled Baraboo's population of 12,000.

The stunning Old Woman in a Shoe pony float's restoration was finished just in time for the parade. Covered with gold leaf, it glistened under the bright summer sun. Making its first appearance in the parade was the Beck Family Calliope. It was

*Baraboo High School band*

*Karen DeSanto*







*Beck Family Calliope*



*Lion and Mirror Tableau*



*America Steam Calliope*

recently procured by Circus World. The beautifully carved little wagon and the America Steam Calliope made it a two calliope parade. Circus World Music Director Larry Stout played the Beck and CW's Performance Director and Singing Ringmaster David SaLoutos brought up the rear in America. The circus performers in CW's Doo-Wop Big Top Show rode atop the Gollmar Bros. Mirror Tableau. This year's 1950s theme honored Circus World's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. 📺



*Old Woman in a Shoe*





*Wild Rumpus Stilt Walkers*



*Ringling Giraffe Wagon*



*Gollmar Bros. Mirror Tableau and CWM circus cast*

The Circus Celebration began on Wednesday evening with a welcoming reception for Circus Historical Society convention attendees at Circus World. The convention sessions and banquet were held in the Al. Ringling Mansion. Threatening weather also moved Thursday evening's two hour concert by Prof. Stich's 25 member Circus Band from Baraboo's Square to the mansion's ballroom. David SaLoutos provided historical background for the lively music and sang several times with the band.

The final event of the celebration was a special 45 minute preview cut of "The Circus" in the Al. Ringling Theatre. The two part, four hour documentary covering circus history through 1956 when Ringling stopped performing under canvas will premiere on PBS in October. 📺



*Carson & Barnes elephants*



## No clowning around

by Shaila Dani, *Courier Times*

**Editor's Note:** *this is a reprint from the July 29, 2004 Bucks County Courier Times.*

America's top clown calls him Uncle Bill. His best friends are daredevils who risk their lives every time they go to work. He can get you the world's best human bomb, sway pole aerialist, dancing elephant or backflipping chimp for wide-eyed, family fun.

Talk about one-stop shopping.

Bill Hall conducts much of his booking and production business from his Churchville home. But in 36 years of business, he has put on shows on every continent except the two poles, as he puts it.

He got his start early. Before his first birthday, his parents brought him along to the circus because they could not get a baby sitter. Since then, Hall hasn't missed seeing a circus at least once a year.

At age four, Hall was feeding the elephants from a large bag of peanuts and wore a tidy red, white and blue sailor suit. A female elephant decided she wanted more. She wrapped her trunk around the little boy, drew him toward her and then helped herself to the peanuts.

A hysterical lady in the crowd hit the elephant on the head with a rolled up umbrella, Hall said. He recalls her shouting, "He is going to kill the little boy!" But a keeper just led the unfazed boy back to his mesmerized parents.

Hall said the memory of that incident made him think, "Gee, this was a field I should be in."

As he grew older, Hall didn't always pay attention to the circus program.

"I was more interested in meeting the performers," said Hall, who got to know the layout of the circus tents pretty well. The foreign roots of many of the performers and their unusual jobs excited him, he said.

When he grew older, Hall worked as a journalist but kept his interest in show biz.



He and a partner began putting together programs for the Circus Hall of Fame, and slowly built a reputation for being reliable and connected to the best talent in the world.

"I pride myself on only selling quality

acts," said Hall, who went solo in 1986. "If I don't think it is first class, I would be cheating my clients and their audience."

Bello Nock, currently billed as the star of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, has known Hall since childhood. "He is a model citizen for someone growing up," said Nock, an aerialist performer and clown.

Nock said the entertainment industry is characterized by exaggerations claiming the best, the highest, the greatest ever. In that climate, Hall is known for telling it like it is.

"In the entertainment business, he is known as the one guy of a few – his word is as good as a written contract," said Nock, who has not been booked by Hall for years, but still turns to him for advice.

Hall is proud of a spectacular event he staged in 1972 for the Philadelphia Phillies. For a \$3,000 fee, the Great Karl Wallenda



*Hall addressing the Circus Ring of Fame.*

walked 1,000 feet across a wire above Veterans Stadium and did a headstand over second base. He was 67 years old. After his 300-foot high walk, Wallenda stepped off the wire right into Hall's arms.

Hall took the Skywalk act to major league stadiums all over the country and organized many more extraordinary events for the Phillies. Wallenda successfully repeated the event at the Vet at age 71. Two years later in 1978, at an event unrelated to Hall, Wallenda fell to his death in Puerto Rico.

But Hall said he does not think of danger when he watches daredevils like Wallenda. He doesn't think of it when his friend Nock, whose strawberry blonde hair sticks straight up eight inches and was rated America's top clown by *Time* magazine in 2001, is dangling from a trapeze connected to a helicopter. He remains fully confident when buddy Benny Koske, the human bomb, blows himself up in a coffin-sized box with enough explosives to destroy a 1.5-ton safe.

"They know what they are doing," said Hall, who calls these daredevils "entertainment athletes."

"I am a person that is proud to say I am not afraid of anything, but I am respectful of a lot of things," said Nock, who casually mentioned he walked over a 400 foot wire, 260 feet high above Reliant Stadium in Houston, Texas on Wednesday.

"They never go up there thinking they are going to have an accident."

And Hall doesn't either. "It is not fair to clients to go in and feel apprehensive."

Still, accidents happen. Hall's buddy Elvin Bale has been a paraplegic since 1986 when he overshot an airbag after exploding from a cannon at a Hong Kong amusement park. Hall did not book that event. Now Bale is an instructor for budding cannonballs, and is vice president of operations for New Cole Brothers Circus in DeLand, Fla.



*Kenneth Feld and Hall*

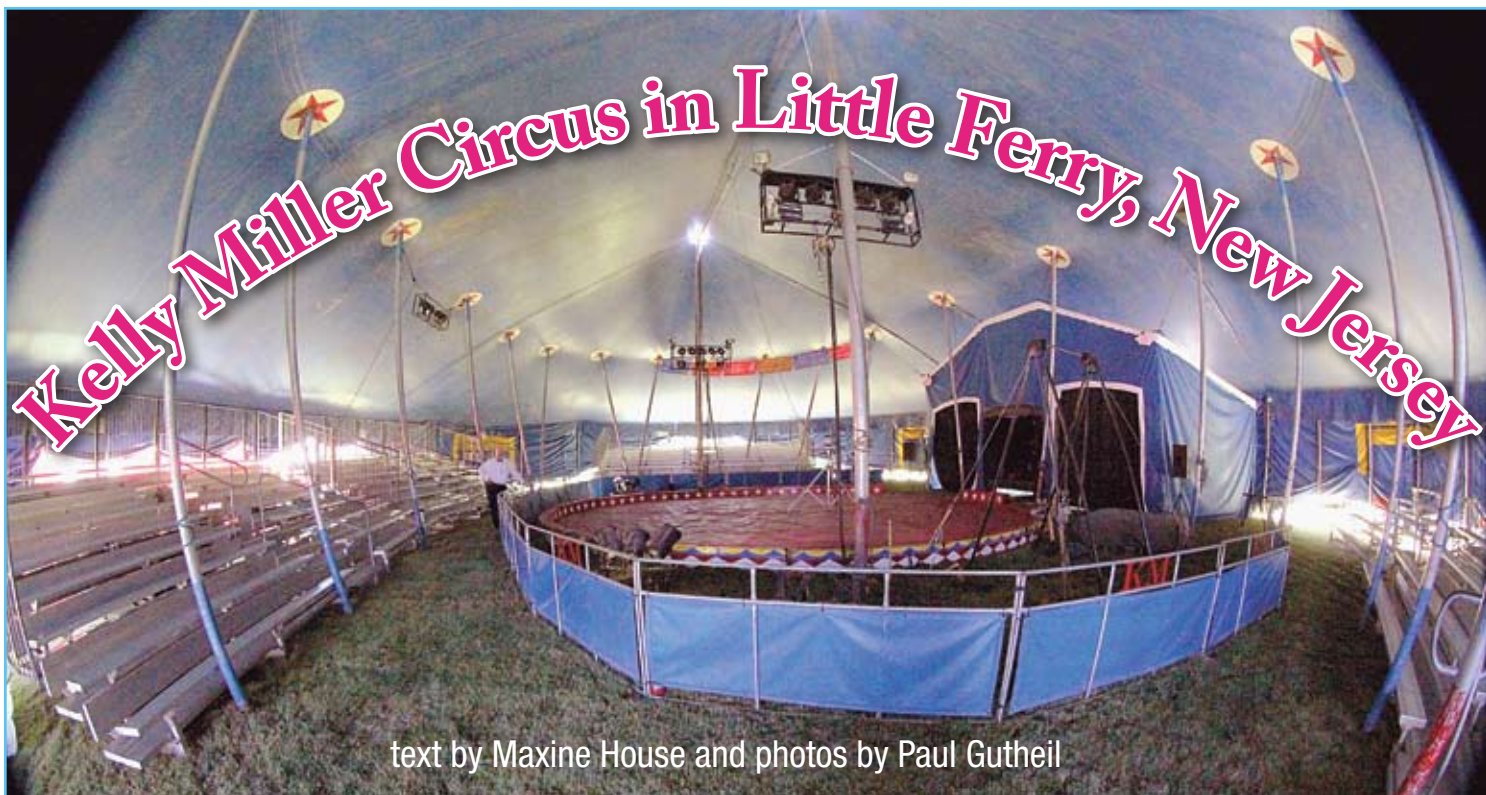
At a Hall act for Ringling Bros. in 1972, hair suspensionist Marguerita Michelle Ayala came loose from her hair harness during her grand finale. She sustained a broken neck, only to be back in the ring about two years later to perform with her daughters. Doctors said her recovery was due to the extraordinary strength of her neck from all that suspension.

"They are different in that their occupation is not 9 to 5," Hall said. "A lot of them risk their neck. It's a job; many times it's something they are born into."

Still, it's the risk and danger that makes these acts so much fun to watch, and accidents very rarely happen. Hall is a widely respected name in the industry because he has the trust of many of his clients. He can relate to performers, from his younger days on the road, touring with troupes. Also, while he is a behind the scenes guy, he is a showman at heart.

"It's a fun but challenging business," Hall said. "I get a kick out of putting on a good show. 🍀"





We fans in the Northeast, who had for many summers enjoyed John Ringling North's Kelly Miller Circus when it toured the area, wondered what the new ownership of James Judkins would bring. To our delight, we still had a traditional circus to enjoy, albeit without animals.

The familiar red trucks were nicely repainted and the former Kelly Miller tent was used minus the cupola. Then too there were



Miss Deya



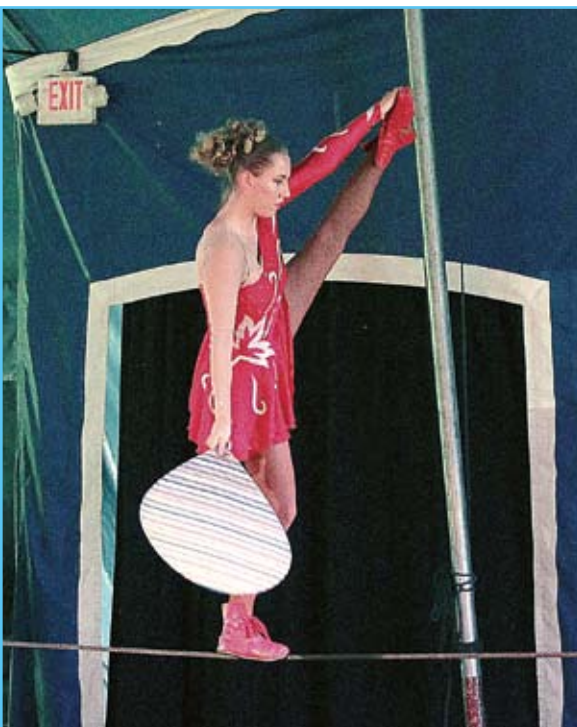
Kozee (left) and EZ

the familiar faces of fire eater Lamount now also the ringmaster, the ever versatile Friedman Torales and the superb gymnastic couple Mendee and Zaiya. With an additional small cast of talented performers, the Kelly Miller Circus presented a highly crowd pleasing show.

On a beautiful summer day in Little Ferry NJ, we watched the following lineup:

- Introduction – Lamount opens the show as the flamboyant ringmaster. He has been on the show for several seasons, first as roustabout, then as fire-eater and now the ringmaster! Lamount is successful at whatever he tries.
- Rola Bola – Friedman Torales. Whatever act he performs, Friedman also does it well. This rola bola act he takes to new heights! Friedman also appears in several other acts and handles maintenance of equipment on the show.
- Aerialists – Mendee and Zaiya. Same act as in other seasons, same





*Emilie Arbaugh*



*Zaiya (left) and Mendee*

exquisite presentation.

- Clowns – EZ & Kozee. This couple had been clowning separately for many years, but now they are a couple who work well together. They were part of the 2015 Circus Summit. Throughout the show EZ & Kozee used a lot of traditional clown gags.
- Hula Hoops – Miss Deya. In addition to her high energy hula

hoop act, she also handles the office while her daughter handles ticket sales.

- Clowns – EZ & Kozee
- Low Wire – Miss Emilie Arbaugh. Along with her wire act, Emilie also face paints, does aerial ropes and handles office business. 🇨🇦



*Lamont*

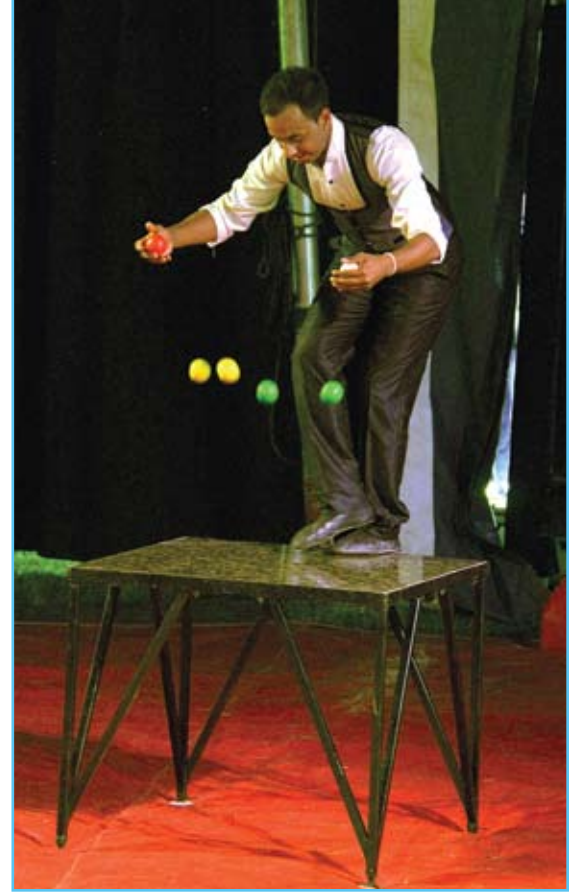


*Aerial Rope Act – Emilie & Kelly*





(L-R) EZ, Lamount, Frank Vopasek, Helen Vopasek, Kozee, Marty Loesner, Chief of Hose Company #1 (sponsor of the event for many years).



Weaam Hassan



Ringling Clown reunion

- Clowns – EZ & Kozee
- Mongolian Acrobats – Mendee & Zaiya join with eight other men and three other women for an exciting display of various tricks.
- Human Volcano – Lamount really gets the audience pumped up: “Don’t try this at home!” he admonishes.
- Intermission – 15 minutes
- Clowns – EZ & Kozee
- Russian Swing – Mongolian Troupe – fast moving and exciting
- Aerial Rope Act – Emilie & Kelly. According to Frank Vopasek, who spent many hours on the show lot, besides aerial ropes Kelly

takes tickets and does props for Weaam’s juggling act. At 19 she’s in her first year on the road and loves it.

- Clowns – EZ & Kozee
- Bounce Juggling – Weaam Hassan was born into a circus family in Egypt and has emigrated to the USA. He knows his stuff and presents a thrilling fast-paced act.
- Rope Jumping – Mongolian Troupe – a rousing, creative act to finish the show.
- Finale – Entire Cast

This season there were no live musicians - all the music was taped.

Most of us fans saw multiple performances that day, and more later as the Kelly Miller Circus moved around New Jersey. 📍



Mongolian Troupe



# LOOMIS BROS. CIRCUS

## in Kissimmee FL



text by Maxine House and photos by Howard Pace

*Melvino welcomes attendees to the lot!*

*Ringmaster Justin Loomis*

The Loomis Bros. Circus again performed inside the air conditioned KVLS Pavilion at Osceola Heritage Park in

Kissimmee FL on August 8, 2018. Probably often used for livestock shows, the building only had space for two rings. Bleachers were 🚫



*Aaron Caballero Sr.*



*Rola Bola*





*Yulissa Caballero*



*Igor and Tatiana Aristov*

on three sides; concessions, food and face painting near the back entrance. The show seemed to have plenty of staff wearing black or red T-shirts with the Loomis logo.

The performance began on time in ring two with Ringmaster Justin Loomis wearing a red sequined coat with tails, black pants and a tall black top hat. "It's showtime!" While he sang "Sawdust, Spangles, and Beads," the cast of 18 performers entered the ring twirling ribbons or hula hoops or juggling.

This quickly morphed into the unicycling Whiz Kids act. Back from last season the Caballero family provided several acts. Father Aaron in clown makeup, Aaron Jr (14), Adal (12) and Yulissa (15) cycled around the ring performing the usual unicycle maneuvers. Aaron Sr rode the "smallest bicycle" along the top of the ring curb as their finale.

Then in ring one where the steel cage had already been erected, Brian Franzen presented his cat act – three Bengal and two white tigers. His wife Irene tended to the cages and props. The live music greatly enhanced the act: "Eye of the Tiger" and "Shangri-la," when a tiger was perched on the spinning globe.

Back to ring two, Gumar and Irina Matagirov did their quick change act, now quite common on circuses. This one had the additional trick of Irina changing her glove colors.

A short "light up toy" pitch was given by Justin before in both rings two young men, Yaroslav Matagirov and George Arestov, whose parents are on the show, performed their rola bola acts. Their fathers acted as prop hands for their sons.

Yulissa Caballero was back in the ring with a hair hang act. Her mother serves as her assistant.

Although Melvino the clown (Aaron Rider) had been highly visible greeting patrons at the door and walking around the arena, this was the only time he performed in the ring. It was rather



*Angelica Rodriguez*





*(L-R) Shawn Marren Sr., Tony Bruno, Denis Sherman, Chris Norton, Chris Wise, Greg Amos.*

refreshing to have one and only one clown appearance! Melvino nicely did his routine of setting up a slack wire between two folding chairs with its frustrations. He finally laid the rope on the ground, walked it, and styled as his pants fell down.

Bells Super Poodles followed in ring one. This season the poodles have had their fur dyed to look like various animals – a lion, zebra, panda, etc. It made for a cute act and the audience responded favorably.

Evelyn Caballero (18) and Tatiana Arestov presented their hula hoop acts in both rings.

Then in ring two Angelica Rodriguez in a lovely red costume gave a most pleasing hand balancing/chair stacking routine. She piled five chairs, put a table on top, set up a folding chair where she briefly sat down, and then assumed an amazing contortion pose on the chair.

Two men, who had been concessionaires up until this point in the circus, now donned helmets and rode their motorcycles around the large globe in the back between the two rings. While Eric Aguiar and Angelo Coscano did nothing spectacular in the globe, the audience always loves this type of act.

Their act ended the first half of the show for a 20 minute intermission. The elephant ride in ring two at \$10.00 was popular.

A cube act was scheduled to open the second half of the show, but Justin cut it in the 4:30 show because of time constraints. George Aristov, Yaroslav Matagirov, and Temo Rodriguez performed for the 7:30 show.

In both rings Brissell Bells and Evelyn Caballero presented sword balancing/ladder acts.

Igor and Tatiana Aristov did a well coordinated juggling act in eye-catching black and silver costumes.

Paula Rodriguez, sister of Angelica, also in a stunning red costume, used aerial silks. Her sudden rolling drop was well done.

The show ended with the elephants. As Justin put it, "Hold on to your horses, here come the elephants!" Brian Franzen along with Irene presented their pair, one Asian and one African. The day before our visit an animal activist toting a large camera had tried to photograph the "abuse" of the elephants in the ring. She was removed from the building, foully cursing circuses.

The finale had the entire cast returning to the ring carrying American flags while Justin thanked the audience for coming.

The live band is a great addition to the circus! Hidden above and behind the motorcycle globe, it consisted of six men instead of the usual three. Justin expands the band as the venue calls for it. Members at this gig included conductor/drummer Tony Bruno; keyboard, Shawn Marren, Sr; saxophone, Greg Amos; trumpet, Chris Wise; bass, Chris Norton; and percussion, Denis Sherman. The latter has been on this show for 13 seasons! No taped music was used, and the live musical response to the action is always invaluable.

Loomis Bros. Circus then packed up for their next date in Sebring FL, where Justin expected more animal activists. 🚫

## A Happy Ending

Nico is an eight-year-old Maine coon cat who has lived his life traveling on the Loomis Bros Circus with Lyne DelMonte. Lyne, the widow of Pinky DelMonte, is a member of the office staff and runs the pony ride concession.

On June 11, in Lawrence SC, a thunder storm frightened Nico into hiding. Lyne looked all over, even staying over an extra day while the show left for its next date. She went door to door and posted signs. No Nico.

Two months later in Kissimmee FL, Lyne got a phone call – a cat had been found. Pictures exchanged on the Internet and phone calls confirmed that it was Nico. Traveling in a crate with an express company, Nico returned to Lyne on the day we visited the show! All of his two-legged friends on the show rejoiced, but most of all Lyne.



*Lyne DelMonte holding Nico.*



# Loomis Bros. "Circus Is Alive" Tour

**Palmetto FL**

*Condorito*



text and photos by Gail Perr Czina

Loomis Bros. Circus is now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year. Traveling to a different town nearly every day, it is the only circus in North America to use three rings and live music. The music under the direction of Tony Bruno added the appropriate excitement and beauty to the acts. Prior to the show and during intermission, tickets for pony rides, elephant rides, face painting and the jumbo slide were available. After the finale, pictures could be taken with some of the performers.

Loomis Bros. Circus tickets are very reasonably priced. It is a show suitable for all ages. In Palmetto, Florida where we saw the show, the circus performed in the air-conditioned convention center which was a welcome escape for the 90 plus degrees outside. Often the circus raises money for a local charity. When the circus moved on to Sebring FL, it was forced to close. The town under pressure from PETA had created an ordinance that forbade exotic animals from performing at the Highlands County Fairgrounds. However, that was not the case in Palmetto where everyone was excited to see tigers and elephants in the show.

Ringmaster Justin Loomis, the world's premier singing ringmaster, directed our attention to each ring. Sometimes only the center ring was featured; other times it was a challenge to keep our eyes on all three rings. The international cast of performers kept us on the edge of our seats.

Miss Angie Rodriquez from Mexico performed her contortionist/balancing act for the first time in the United States. Balancing and contorting on chairs stacked high in the center ring, Miss Angie started the afternoon with a breathtaking performance.

*Unicycles*



*Silks*





*Brian Franzen's tiger through a ring of fire*

Next in the center ring, Condorito, a clown in black and white makeup along with one young girl and two young boys, showed their skills on the low and high unicycles. They moved around the ring juggling, twirling hoops and ribbons singularly and joined together. The act ended with the clown riding



*Magical Quick Change*



*Hula Hoops*



*Chandelier balanced on forehead while climbing a ladder.*





*Rola Bola*

a very small bicycle around the top of the ring curb. I don't know how he got his huge shoes on the tiny pedals.

Next the ringmaster directed our attention to the gleaming stainless steel cage at the end of the arena. A white Siberian tiger and a royal Bengal tiger did their balancing act, ending with the Bengal jumping through a ring of fire.

Our attention was taken back to the center ring where a couple preformed a "Magical Quick Change". I was amazed by the number of colorful changes. Following the quick-change act, a very talented young man did a rola bola act. His balancing skill was evident as his pile of cylinders grew higher and higher and rolled in different directions. Next a woman took to the air, hanging only by her hair. She twirled ribbons and hoops ending with twirling a fire baton all the time suspended over the center ring.

While the center ring was being prepared for the next act, a clown tried to set up two step stool ladders with a rope tied between them to use as a tight rope. The children laughed and hooted at his antics. "Painted Poodles on Parade", Bells super dogs, entered the arena next. The realistically painted poodles, painted as different animals made you believe that you were really watching a lion, zebra, panda or giraffe performing tricks. The well trained poodles were fun to watch.

The Cirque-style cube manipulation held our attention in three rings. Then a woman in each of the two end rings twirled numerous hula hoops. The motorcycle "Globe of Death" ended the first part of the show. After intermission women in each of the end rings did a variety of balancing acts on ladders. One climbed a free-standing ladder while balancing a light chandelier on her forehead. Another woman maneuvered up and over a free-



*Sword balanced while climbing a ladder.*



*The Franzen elephants*



*Painted Poodles on Parade*



standing ladder with a huge sword balanced on her chin. The Aristov Juggling Duo from Moscow, Russia astounded us with their precise, juggling moves. The interaction between the husband wife team was beauty in motion. Next, "Whiz Kids" did unicycle acts in all three rings.

In ring one, a young woman held our attention as she wrapped and released herself on the silks. Her talent and beauty were a joy to watch.

And finally, it was time for the elephants! People were so happy to see the elephants in the show! The Brian Franzen Asian and African elephants performed their antics ending with one elephant with all four feet on a ball.

This was a jam-packed circus enjoyed by all ages. 📌

*Finale*



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# Jest Fest



*Returning favorite Silent Clown Arsene Dupin from Paris delights his audiences with great concepts and comic timing. He trained with Marcel Marceau.*

photo by Suzanna Mars



*David Ballard,  
Festival Organizer and Ringmaster*



*Fest regular Silent Clown Avner the Eccentric pulls out all the stops to bring smiles to all with a variety of well-honed routines. He has worked in films and on Broadway.*

photo by Suzanna Mars

text by Melanie Langsdale Aultman and David Ballard;  
photos by the author except as noted

Jest Fest is an annual celebration of comedy and circus produced by the City of Gainesville FL, Department of Parks, Recreation and

Cultural Affairs and held at the historic Thomas Center. After five years of sunshine, the sixth Fest date this past April 15, 2018, met with inclement weather. Despite that, a crowd of 4,000 attended and enjoyed the festivities.



*Veteran circus star and crowd pleaser Johnny Peers & the Muttville Comix. Attendees of all ages appreciate the patient training and energetic presentation of this act.*

photo by Suzanna Mars

In the "show must go on" tradition, organizers David Ballard and Suzanna Mars were tasked with finding creative solutions to performance times and staging locations. Under a covered walkway, one could create colorful bottled sand art and play chess by moving giant sized pieces. In a foyer, Gypsy Guerrilla Band music could be heard. Roving entertainers included a fiddler, puppetry and stilt walking. Red clown noses aplenty were provided by the city and food trucks offered refreshments.

In the inside area known as the Spanish Court were alternating performances by world-famous silent clown Arsene Dupin from Paris and Avner Eisenberg known as Avner the Eccentric with Gregg Jones as MC.





*Alex's wife Claire with head standing bookends Alex and Tino Wallenda. Veteran clown JP Theron keeps a lookout while Olinka Wallenda handles other performance details.*



*Claire (wife of Alex) and Olinka (wife of Tino) Wallenda await the morning performance.*

*photo by Suzanna Mars*

The Thomas Center basement was the scene for performances by Showtune Shenanigans and Squawk! The Amazing Bird Show. Various artisans were provided space there to showcase their wares.

Outside, Johnny Peers & his Muttville Comix put on a crowd pleasing show.

Luckily for the many gathered fans, the Wallenda troupe was able to switch up the order of their planned performances and mount the high wire outside before the floodgates opened. Alex and Claire amazed and amused with their juggling routine before joining Tino on the wire for bicycle riding, chair balancing and double headstands by the dynamic duo. Claire also did a handstand between wire walking Tino and Alex.



*Alex, Claire and Olinka observe a somber moment as family patriarch Tino addresses the crowd and muses about various things including faith and how things are changing.*

While closing the show, the Wallendas were able to demonstrate adaptability by moving their presentation to the lovely Spanish Court area inside the Thomas Center. Alex and Claire juggled; Tino, Alex and JP Theron reprised "Tummy Troubles"; and attendees were able to get an up close and personal view of how some of the equipment works.

While the proximity of this year's event date to the CFA's annual convention sadly prevented some from coming, the good news is that the date for next year's Jest Fest has already been set for Sunday, March 31, 2019. The Wallendas will once again be gracing fans with performances, so please mark your calendars now and plan to attend. You will not be disappointed. 📌



# *Star Family Circus* *in Salem & Sebring OH*



text and photos by Dan Weaver

Cathy English brought her Star Family Circus to Ohio this year minus some of her family. Her daughter Reyna was not with her. That's why Star had no animals as she did the dogs and monkey last year. Star played Salem after Sebring and it was a much bigger building, so they used the perch pole and also the comedy car. In Sebring the ceiling wasn't high enough and they couldn't get the car inside, so they did substitute acts for that show. But both towns received good value for the ticket price and concessions, which is what Cathy always delivers.



*Cathy English*



*Julissa Zamudio*



*Brandon Ayala*





Elizabeth Ayala



Julissa Zamudio



Popotitos



Looking for a sticker!

Star Family Circus continues on page 48 ➡





*Victor Abadilla*



*Brandon Ayala*



*German Ramos*



*Julissa Zamudio*





Popotitos



Victor Abadilla and sons



Ayala Family – Brandon, Elizabeth, Jose



Victor Abadilla

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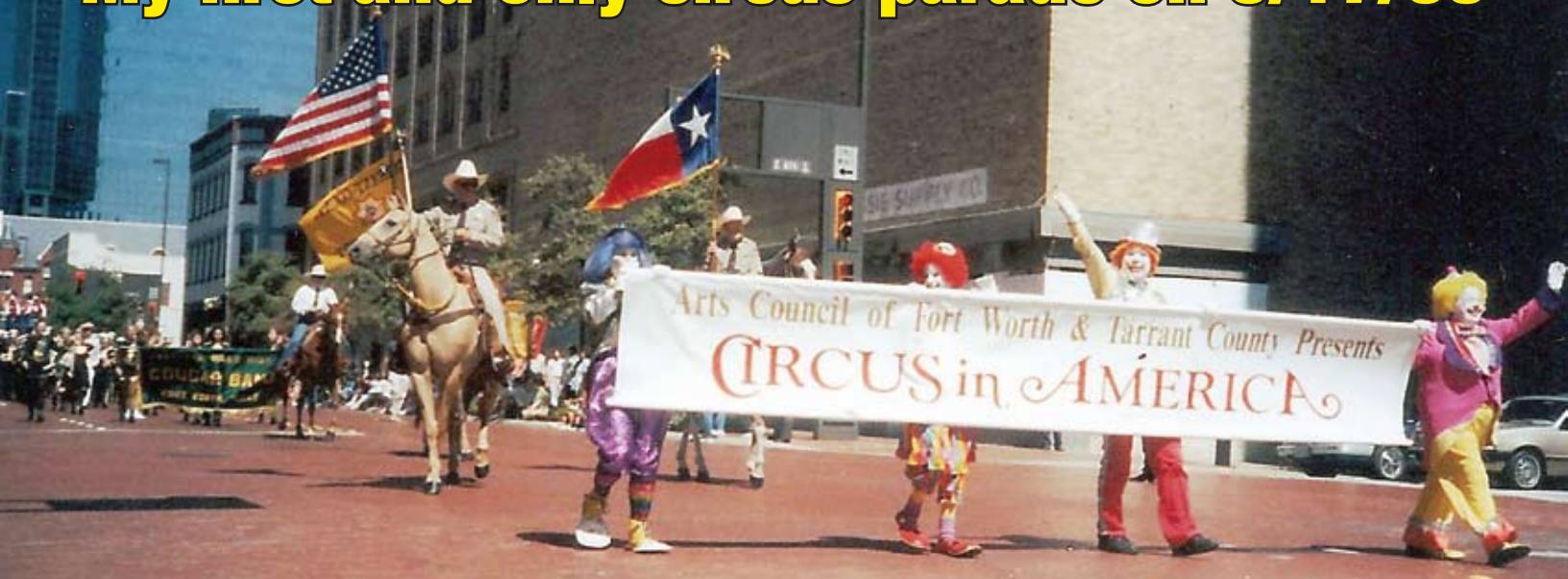


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# My first and only circus parade on 9/17/93



*Start of circus parade with clowns holding banner, flags, and a high school marching band playing circus marches.*

text and photos by Jim Stegall

Two thousand-eighteen has been noted as the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the circus in America. I have been a circus fan since a young child, even before I joined CFA. I have attended many circuses and as a member of circus organizations experienced much pleasure attending circus related activities. However, I have only actually been present and seen one circus parade.

I became aware of the event seeing advertisements in a Fort Worth newspaper. The parade was a part of Circus in America, a fund-raiser for the Arts Council of Fort Worth and Tarrant County. The entertainment event was produced by Circus World Museum.



*Final preparations and awaiting the arrival of four "greys" for the calliope wagon.*



My wife Pat and I managed to take time off to see the Friday noon circus parade. We arrived in Downtown Fort Worth early enough to see some of the pre parade preparations in the Sundance Square area. The area was beginning renovations to develop what is now a Downtown tourist destination. We saw the parade twice. The parade went east on Main Street to the Tarrant County Convention Center, turned around, and then returned back to Sundance Square. I am not sure how many spectators saw the parade,

*The six horse hitch is shown with a reasonable view of the right side and rear of the bandwagon.*





*Good view of the front and left side of the bandwagon on its return. Again, without moving our location we saw both sides of the parade. It was special because each side of The Pawnee Bill bandwagon is different.*

but there seemed to be a crowd of somewhere around two to three hundred in the area where we viewed the parade. Being noon and particularly hot for September may have hindered the number of spectators.

The photos of the parade were taken with a Cannon 35 mm roll camera. The prints have since been scanned and edited as digital files. There are probably other photos and possibly videos of the parade but I have not seen any. I have collected additional information on the event and recorded interviews of local participants for my files. If anyone attended, has information about or

participated in the parade or the circus connected with it, I would appreciate hearing from you. Please contact me at <csdairy@wccs.net>.

At this time I will not expand the narrative. That will be for another article. You will note that I did not identify any of the parade wagons. I hope you enjoy attempting to figure out which ones they were. The photos and comments are intended to provide a record of this event for the annals of our organization. In Downtown Fort Worth, Texas on Friday September 17, 1993 (25 years ago) there was a circus parade celebrating 200 years of the circus in America. 🇺🇸



*The parade comes back by. Note the banner advertisements on the back of the wagon.*



*The elephants! After the parade, I think they probably headed straight for a "dip" in the Trinity River next to the showgrounds.*





*Paul's Pages*

photos and comments from Paul Gutheil

# RB&BB at Coney Island NY, 2010



*Front door of big top showing parachute jump*



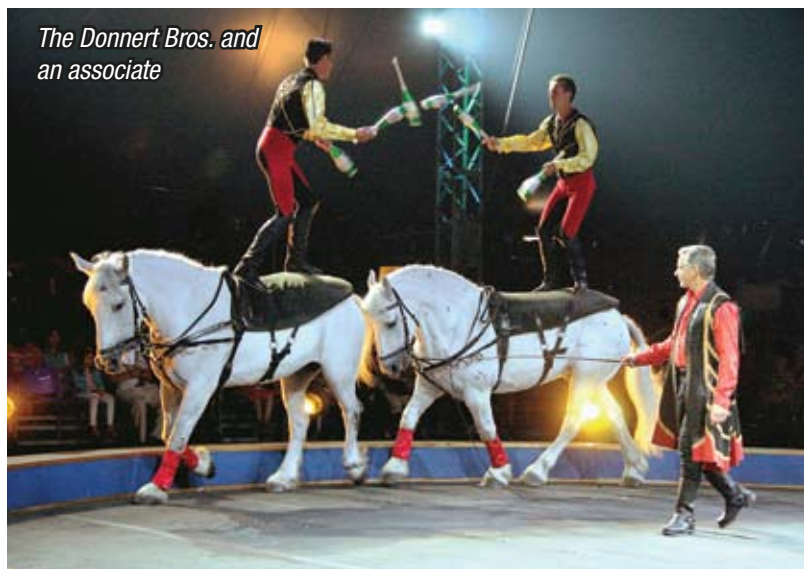
*Lions being wheeled in*



*Souvenir Stand*



*The Donnert Bros. and an associate*

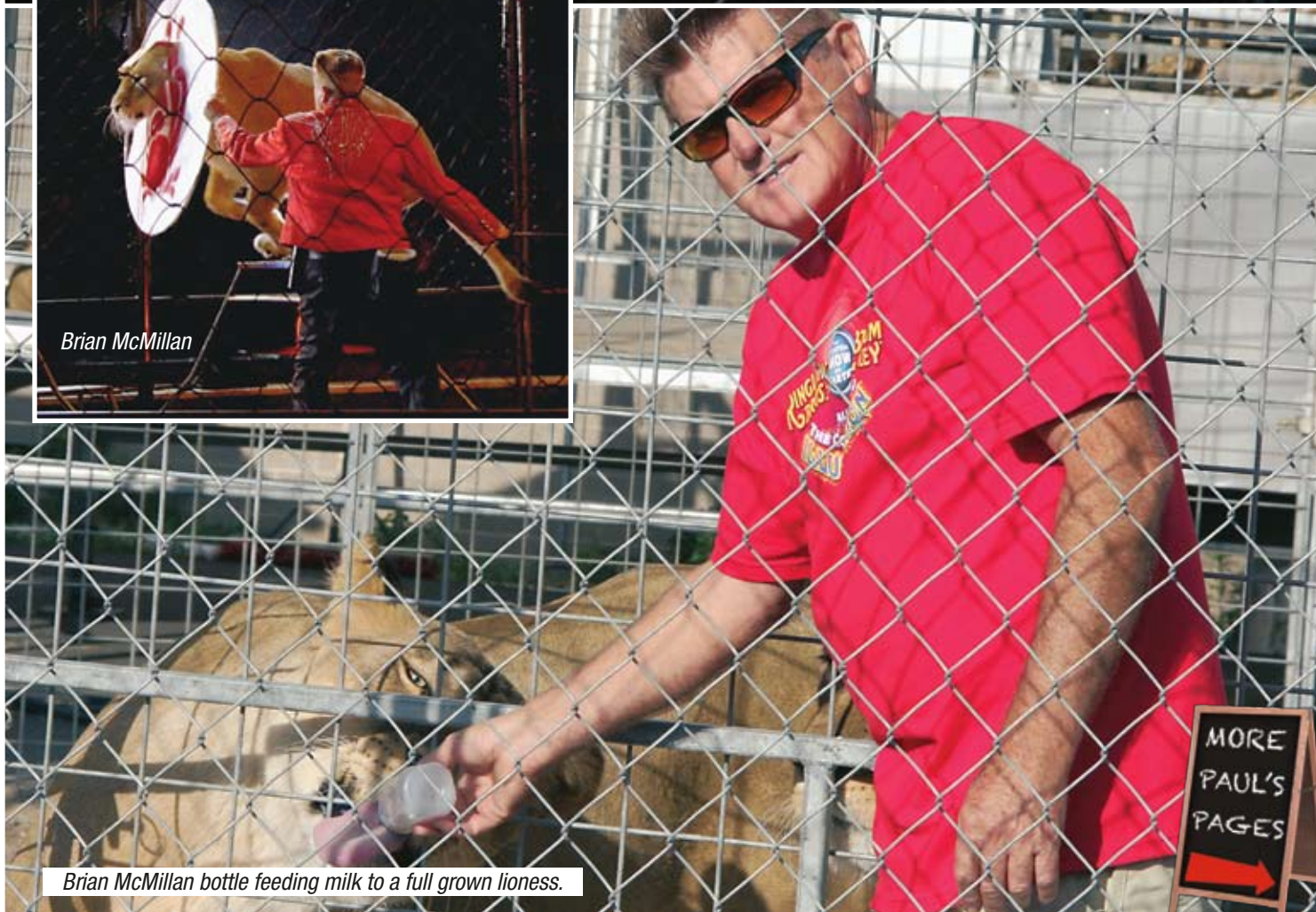




Brian McMillan's white lion



Brian McMillan



Brian McMillan bottle feeding milk to a full grown lioness.





*Band for Illuscination*



*Clown Dean Kelly*



*The Barreda family, (l-r)  
Lou, Jorge, Julia & Lou Ann,  
just visiting the show.*



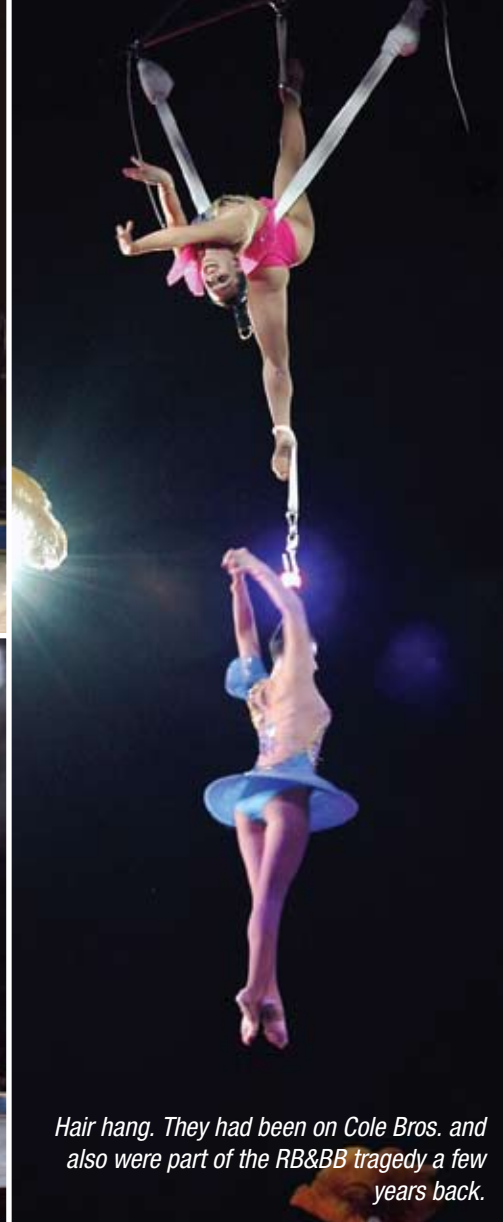
*Magic*



*Russian Barre*

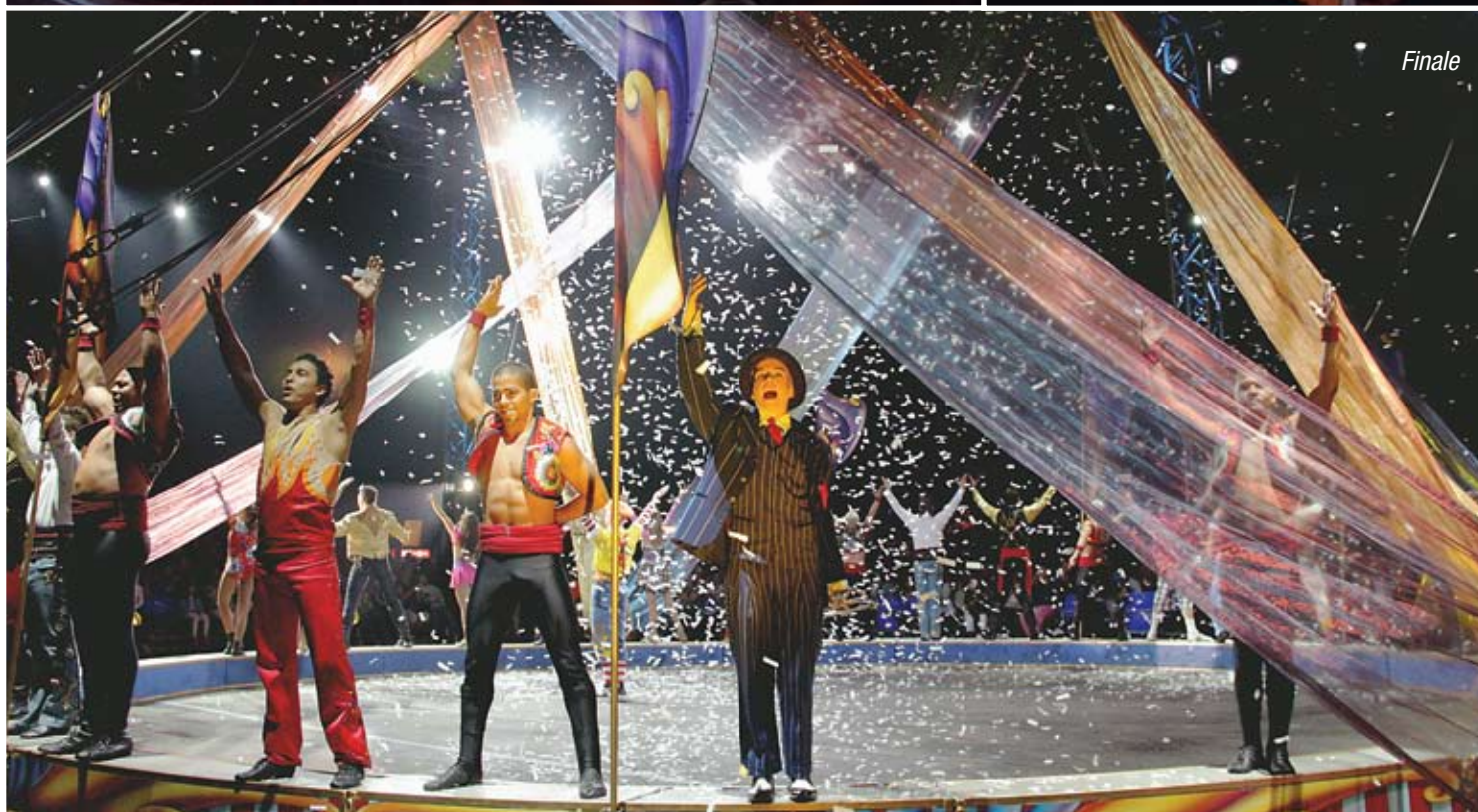


*Ringling elephants presented by Ramon Esqueda. His daughter is on the elephant and the other girl was from the magic act per Paul's memory.*



*Hair hang. They had been on Cole Bros. and also were part of the RB&BB tragedy a few years back.*

*Finale*





# Tanbark Topics



by William B. Hall III  
<billhallevnts@verizon.net>

Tanbark: shredded bark from which the tannin has been extracted, used to cover circus arenas.

Tanbark Topics: Right here for 56 years.

## Quad quests

Over more than four decades we've seen a few attempts by male flying trapeze artists to successfully catch the difficult and elusive quadruple somersault. All failed.



Tito Gaona at the 2018 CFA convention in Normal, Illinois having some fun. photo by David Orr

Our first viewing of a live "quad" try centered on Tito Gaona in the spring of 1978. It occurred on opening night of an 11-week stand by Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus at New York City's Madison Square Garden.

The lead leaper in his illustrious family's Flying Gaonas' foursome, Tito, did not even come close on his much-ballyhooed shot – media types were there in droves – at the heralded trick. Had he connected, it would have been the first successful quad in circus history, while ensuring him big top fabledom forever.

Tito claimed having done the quad during a 1976 practice session in Florida, but did not ever accomplish it in a public venue.

More than four years later, 17-year-old Miguel Vázquez threw four back somersaults into the steady hands of his brother/catcher Juan, age 31. This occurred during a Ringling show at Tucson AZ on July 10, 1982. Great coverage of the first-time feat was accorded by *The New York*



Miguel Vázquez

photo by Philip Weyland



Amméd Garcia Tuniziani

*Times*, per a July 13, '82 article by circus savvy writer Glenn Collins.

Earlier in 1982 the Vázquez family showed us videos of Miguel's successful practice quads from prior times. They advised that Miguel nailed his first quad while practicing on August 19, 1981 at Long Beach CA. It happened, said the Vázquez, after 270 attempts, which supposedly has the flyer hurtling to his catcher at an estimated speed of 75 miles per hour.

But now, we've actually seen a live, successful quad attempt and catch, thanks to a June 23 visit to a 3:00 P.M. matinee of the bankruptcy resurrected though struggling Big Apple Circus (BAC) at Philadelphia PA.

It happened during a routine by the Flying Tunizianis, consisting of chief flyer Ammed Garcia, co-leapers being his wife, Stephanie (nee Evans) and Mauricio Navas, and catcher Adriano de Quaera.

Part of an 11-person doublewide trapeze troupe that performed with Ringling's Blue circus unit into May of 2017, the Tunizianis' present cast hails from South America. Ammed, age 28, comes from Venezuela; his wife, 28, and de Quaera, 34, are Brazilians; while Navas, 34, is a native

of Peru.

Amméd, we were told, began catching public quads in the months before Ringling's Blue Unit shuttered on May 22, 2017. (Ringling's Red Unit of *The Greatest Show on Earth* closed two weeks earlier.) His first completed quad with Ringling was March 3, 2017, in a show at Barclays Center, Brooklyn NY.

In the aforementioned BAC format of last June 23, ringmaster/announcer T. M. (Ty) McFarlan, in a pre-intermission spot, explained that circus props' hands would hoist the flying trapeze net, striving to exceed "their previous record of two



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*The Flying Tuniziani: (left to right) Mauricio Navas, Estefani Evans, Ammed Tuniziani and Adriano de Quadra.*



*The Wallenda Family at the Big Apple Circus in 2017-2018*

Juliana Crawford

minutes". Enlisting help from male/female ushers besides the show's regular all-male props crew, the net was erected in "A new record of one minute!", barked McFarlan.

The setup included an usherette anchoring a steel support cable for the net next to our grandstand seat. We were positioned several feet below the catcher's area ("catch trap") of the trapeze rigging.

The Tunizianis' routine began with a double layout by Navas, followed by Garcia's shot at a forward double somersault that went plop! He missed and landed in the net.

"Not a good day for the quad leaper," we thought.

His wife then executed a double back somersault, followed by McFarlan's somewhat surprising declaration that Ammed would attempt a quadruple somersault. He and catcher Adriano connected – almost above our lifted head!

We expected greater audience reaction within the half-filled tent of spectators, who offered standard applause, some cheers and a "Wow!" from us. Figuring such a trick deserved better from the audience, we deduced that perhaps the stunt was too smoothly handled to bring a more excited response.

The act's final feat aloft was a passing leap threesome, a flight that generated greater audience excitement than Ammed's quad.

The aforementioned usherette/prop hand, when asked, said that Ammed completes the quad "about 75 percent of the time."

Two more acts from the Garcia-Tunizianis ensemble were with the most recent BAC edition, whose 40<sup>th</sup> season ran from last October to a June 24 close at Philadelphia. They were the roller skating turn of Ammed's oldest brother, Dandino Garcia, and his wife, Luciana, and solo juggler Gamal Garcia. Ammed is the youngest of

five brothers.

Excluding trapezists, Nik (Troffer) Wallenda's two women/six men high wire corps that effected its signature seven-person pyramid, and Jenny Vidbel's liberty horses and ponies, much of the BAC program, though showcasing quality and entertaining numbers, resembled a cabaret style offering. Unlike previous BAC productions, the 40<sup>th</sup> lacked the impact of an exciting, multi-person troupe, such as springboard acrobats.

Artists included rola-bola specialist Jan Damm; contortionist/handbalancer Elayne Kraemer; Vidbel's five performing canines; and clowns Joel Jeske and Mr. Skip. Missing were the billed Risley skills of the Anastasini Brothers, Giuliano and top-mounter Fabio (Tanbark Topics, September/October, 2017).



*Ringmaster Ty McFarlan*

More BAC notes and observations: veteran Big Apple trumpeter Rob Slowik led a live, solid-sounding eight person band; high wire moves occurred above a huge air cushion that covered the entire circus ring, set specifically for the act, the program's last before an all-cast farewell finale – the "seven" did not present a chair-balanced female highest up, as we've seen in other

Wallenda turns headed by late family patriarch Karl Wallenda, and the troupes of grandsons Tino Wallenda Zoppé and Enrico (Ricky) Bogino Wallenda; Vidbel said she is retiring animals in her most recent canine presentation and creating a new one for BAC's upcoming 41<sup>st</sup> season, her eighth year with the tented production; contortionist Kraemer needs to get into her exploits quicker, with less posturing gestures; too many clowning skits, almost after every act in the 2017-2018 performance; McFarlan made several announcements from within seating sections, rather than the big ring; and show lighting needed more bright and less darkened and dimmed sequences.

Earlier in this account, we described BAC as "struggling", based on what cast members advised about attendance at their 2018 stands. Perhaps the following will explain use of that word. Post-New York City turnouts were reported as "really bad" for Alphretta, an Atlanta GA, suburb (among factors, perhaps, the news breaking there of disgraced BAC clowning icon Barry [Grandma] Lubin [Tanbark Topics, March/April, 2018]); "good" at Washington, DC; "best ever" for the Boston area with a new location at Somerville MA; and "a poor start" for the season wrap at Philadelphia, May 23-June 24. When business improved at the latter site, 700-800 spectators were present for performances in the 1,715-seat, four tower-masted big top.

But BAC is giving it another go, via a 41<sup>st</sup> season starting with a longer-than-usual run at New York City's Lincoln Center, next set for October 20 into January 27, 2019. The last NYC engagement occurred from October 27, 2017, through January 7, 2018 (Tanbark Topics, September/October, 2017). Ticket sales are now underway for NYC performances. 🍷



## Guinness gunner

Favoring a landing net for his human cannonball shots, David (Bullet) Smith, Jr., used an inflated airbag in completing another Guinness World Records' flight at Tampa FL last March 13. With his 34-foot long cannon barrel positioned on the second deck of Raymond James Stadium, Smith flew 195 feet into an on-field airbag. It occurred as a promotion for release of the Xbox video game, a pirates-themed "Sea of Thieves".



In a stadium of empty seats, the stunt included a drop of 100 feet and broke Smith's previous Guinness mark of being propelled 193 feet, 8.8 inches into a net at Milan, Italy on March 10, 2011, as reported in a prior Tanbark Topics.

The James Stadium site, home of the National Football League's Tampa Bay Buccaneers, was deemed apt for the Smith record-breaker because of the Sea of Thieves' pirate format.

## TV talent

Though not described as such, circus acts and personalities continued competing for advancement and the top prize of \$1 million when NBC-TV's "America's Got Talent" (AGT) launched its 13<sup>th</sup> season of weekly telecasts last June (Tanbark Topics, July/August, 2018 and September/October, 2017).

As noted before, AGT judges Simon Cowell, Heidi Klum, Mel B and Howie Mandell, sometimes joined by a guest evaluator, often gush over these circus-type acts, causing us to wonder: have they ever seen full-scale circus performances?

Among big top acts we've caught in AGT's newest season were a father-daughter, head-balancing team, identified as Sasha, a 15-yearold top-mounter, and



*Father and daughter Sergey and Sasha Korolev*

her understander dad, Sergey Korolev, age 53. Standing upright, Sergey wore a chin-strapped head disc, into which Sasha fitted her cranium for a freely balanced – arms and legs spread – series of inverted spins.

Their dazzling effort recalled a similar stunt presented by what we believed to be a young German couple making their American debut in the 1955 Ringling-Barnum big top edition. Billed as the Carmenas, the act featured Adolph Kleber and his head-spinning sister, Carmen. They were in a three-ring display with future Circus Hall of Famer finger standing star Unus (Franz Furtner) flanked by the brother-sister head-spinners and the Wendanis' equilibrist team.

And then there was Duo Transcend, a stationary trapeze turn with some voltige flips and catches performed by married couple aerialists Tyce and Mary Wolfe-Nielsen.

In a finale to their act the evening of July 17, and with Tyce blindfolded, his wife slipped through her husband's ankle grip and landed with a thud into a thick, on-stage mat. Though showing a red welt on her lower back, the fallen aerialist said, "We would like to try the blindfold trick one more time."

Judges nixed that as Cowell stated, "I don't think there's ever been a singer on any of our competitions who's been note-perfect. It still doesn't make them not amazing. It makes them human. The consequences on this are slightly worse than slightly falling off key, where you nearly broke your-neck." Then, to Tyce, Cowell added, "And the fact that you're legally blind



*Duo Transcend, Tyce and Mary Wolfe-Nielsen*

makes this incredible."

Tyce has Keratoconus, a disorder in which the cornea, the eye's curved, transparent outermost layer, becomes thin and changes into a cone shape that distorts vision.

Despite the performing mishap, AGT judges voted to advance the aerial pair to the next round of competition.

## Bombastic bravado

Another AGT current season contestant was Annaliese Nock, 21-year-old daughter of circus superstar and comedy daredevil Bello Nock. An adept participant in family high wire, space wheel and swaypole acts, she has also performed as a net aerialist and hand-balancing contortionist. But on AGT she opted for ground thrills, appearing as a human bomb.

Nailed inside a three by six foot



*Annaliese Nock takes on a dynamite performance on America's Got Talent.*



“exploding coffin,” she survived a subsequent blast, reportedly triggered by “six sticks of dynamite!” That many? Really? We’d suggest a billing as “Astounding Annaliese”.

Her AGT blast recalled previous human bomb explosions by Benny Koske, “The All-American Daredevil” (Tanbark Topics, May/June, 2018); Allison (“Dynamite Lady”) Bly and her “coffin of death”; and Leo “Suicide” Simon.

## Toppled tower

Jonathan (Olivero) Rinny has resumed his solo and stellar rola-bola acrobatic act upon recovering from a fractured right wrist caused by a performing accident last March 2. Rinny, 26, was hurt when falling to the stage after losing his balance while atop a wavering, eight-cylinder high tower at Circus Circus Hotel Casino in Reno, Nevada.

Rinny said the fall occurred after he performed 70 consecutive shows without a nearby and slender safety-grasp/steadying pole that had been part of his pedestaled apparatus. “I have returned the pole, for now, to prevent another accident,” stated Rinny, whose versatile family is playing an extended engagement at Circus Circus, where their current contract runs through December 31. Rinny also performs in his family’s cycling and juggling routines (Tanbark Topics, September/October, 2017) Rinny also appeared on America’s Got Talent shows last year.



Jonathan Rinny on America’s Got Talent in 2017 with eight cylinders under him.

## British boost

Another castoff from Ringling-Barnum’s aborted, ill-fated 2016–2017 tour who’s continuing to earn a circus income is the diminutive clown, mischief-maker, acrobatic tumbler and straps aerialist Paulo Dos Santos, whose three tours with *The Greatest Show On Earth* partnered him as the half-pint sidekick to and sometimes foil for Ringmaster/Announcer Jonathan Lee Iverson. From Brazil, Dos Santos made his United Kingdom performing debut in the Winter Wonderland 45-minute staging of Cirque Berserk – Rebellion, offered at Hyde Park in London from last November 18 to January 1, 2018.

Also on the Rebellion roster were the USA-based Sourens, juggler Nicolas and wife Kimberly, a solo trapezist.

Dos Santos later joined the annual big top tour of Great Britain’s Zippos Circus, whose 2018 production, “Legacy”, celebrated the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the circus industry that originated in 1768.



photo by Alex Smith

In Ringling’s final “Out of This World” edition that mixed circus and ice skating numbers, Dos Santos was billed as “Paulo, the Circus Starseeker...on an intergalactic mission.” In a corny, oddball story line, he was armed with a “trusty magic telescope, traveling the universe, searching for the galaxy’s greatest performers”. Way out stuff, for sure. (Tanbark Topics, May/June, 2017)

## ZinnZanni Zest

Credited with three Guinness World Records for her adroit hula hoop spinning feats, Alesya Gulevich has returned stateside after engagements abroad, including the 71<sup>st</sup> Foire Aux Vins D’Alsace in Colmar, France from July 27–August 5. She’s now appearing in “Hollywood & Vine”, which premiered this fall as the first production of Teatro ZinZanni in its new Seattle WA, home.



Alesya Gulevich

The venue continues being a Spiegeltent 300-seat structure previously used in another Seattle area location and from 2000 to 2011 in ZinZanni’s initial staging at San Francisco CA.

Gulevich’s castmates in the new cabaret/dinner theater format include hoop aerialist Arianna Lallone; Parisian acrobat Domitil Aillot; a new trapeze act of Ben Wendel and Mick Holsbeke, with the latter also doing a comedy ball-balancing turn; Italian acrobatic dancer and aerialist Giulia Piolanti; and Chinese vertical pole stunter and aerialist Timber Brown, an America’s Got Talent competitor in 2013.

## Bartlett brigade

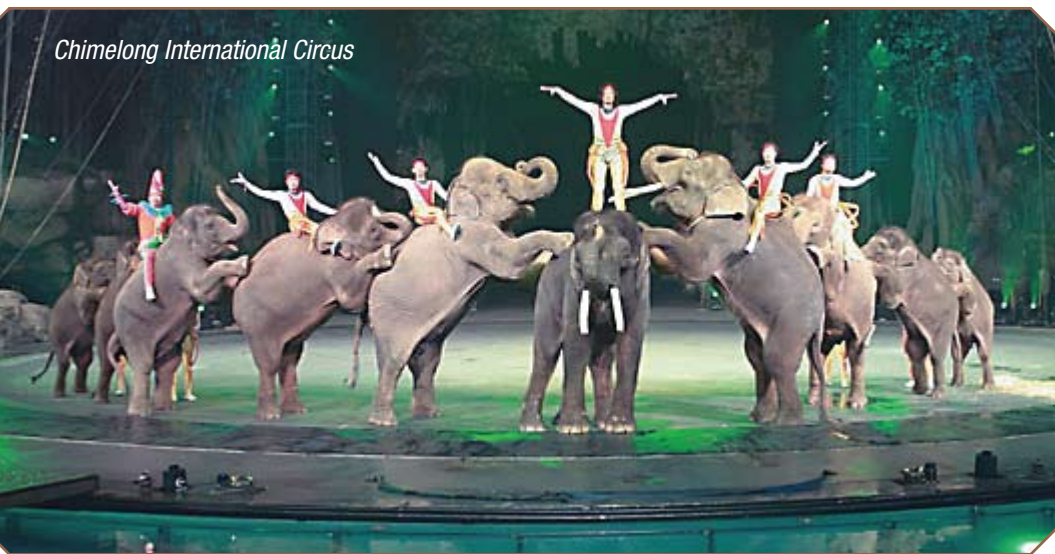
With water skiers, aqua acrobats, kite flyers and stage acts as entertainment, the Tommy Bartlett Show completed its 66<sup>th</sup> spring/summer season this year on the shores of Lake Delton in Wisconsin Dells WI.

Stage features included the Fausto Scorpions’ Risley acrobats; juggler T. J. Howell and his unicycling son, Carson; an aerial “Wheel of Destiny” by The Nerveless Nocks troupe led by Michelangelo Nock; and hand-balancer Rusian Khusinov, introduced as “The Great Russian” (below). ➔





Chimelong International Circus



## Asian aim

Circus shows are among “the star attractions Macau has promoted in an effort to lure tourists who don’t necessarily want to play the (gaming) tables.” That comes from *The Wall Street Journal*, which reported last August 2 that officials in Macau want at least nine percent of revenue to come from non-gambling sources by 2020, up from seven percent in 2016.

A Portuguese territory until 1999, Macau is now under control of Mainland China, where communist government officials are exerting pressure on the city to reduce its reliance on gambling revenue. It’s part of a Red Chinese crackdown on corruption and outflows of currency through Macau, said the Journal.

In nearby South China is that country’s third largest city, Guangzhou, where attractions include the Chimelong International Circus (above left), promoted as the world’s largest permanent circus. In an arena setting, the program has showcased a cannon act with a woman and man projectiles from the Ukraine and Belarus, respectively; a unique “Wheel of Death” rigging of five wheels, with four extending from a centered oval and engaging six aerialists; up to eight men and women motorcyclists spinning inside a “Ball of Death” cylinder; a multi-person flying trapeze group presenting a “Leap through Time and Space” display; a dozen teeterboarders (two women, 10 men); Cossack riders from Kazakstan; and a “Sky Ballet” aerial spectacle.

Among animal attractions were up to seven performing Asian elephants, uncaged bears, geese, pigs, reindeer and a hippopotamus.

## Fair features

A purchased admission to the August 3-19 Indiana State Fair at Indianapolis provided three free shows daily at a “new Big Top Circus”. Ringmastered by Kevin Venardos, the format offered the versatility of “International circus star Bello Nock”; the Urias Troupe Globe of Death motorcyclists; Alanian Cossack Riders; female Duo Surnina as synchronized hand balancers; and juggler Noel Aguilar.

## Pyongyang proteges

If North Korean performers vie, are there any international circus festivals or competitions over recent years that don’t result in top awards for that reclusive country’s large, highly skilled and versatile troupes? An example was the Golden Elephant Circus Festival, also hailed as the Circus Festival of Spain, at Girona last February 22-26 (above right).

North Korean artists, parading under the banner of the government-run National Circus of Pyongyang, won the event’s Golden Elephant (first) prize with a presentation that combined Russian swing, horizontal bar and teeterboard gyrations. Third prize in the Golden Elephant category went to Pyongyang’s high wire turn, while a Silver (second place) Elephant was awarded North Korean handstand equilibrist Han Kuk Ryong.

The Golden Elephant’s second prize winner was Mainland China’s Jinan acrobatic Risley act.

Among competitors at Girona were Mongolian strongman Tulga, who owns Ringling-Barnum credits, and the Audrey (French origin) and Thomas (American)



Golden Elephant Circus Festival

trapeze duo that earned the festival’s Image Jury Award.

For the aforementioned Girona results, our thanks to *King Pole*, quarterly magazine of the Circus Friends Association of Great Britain, which carried a festival account in its June, 2018 issue. The magazine also publishes in March, September and December.

## Danguir daredevils

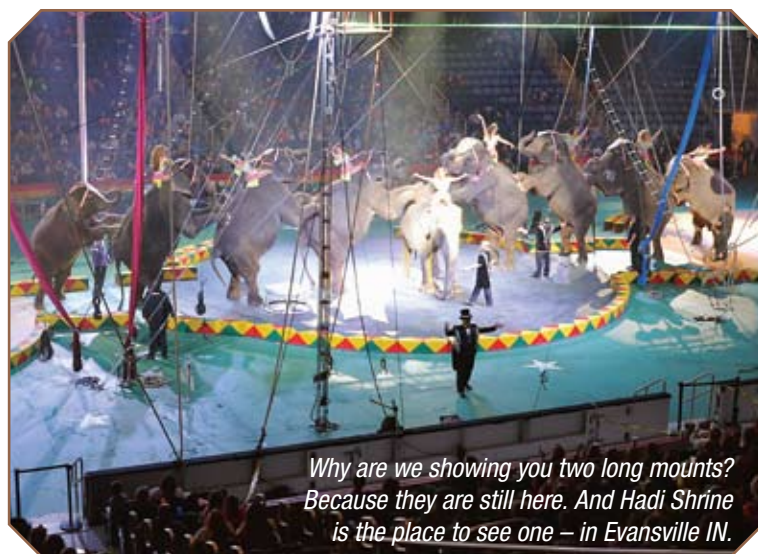
With Ringling-Barnum’s Red Circus Unit over recent years, the Danguir high wire foursome is appearing as the final act in the big top program of Circus Vegas, now touring Great Britain. Consisting of three male Moroccans and a Russian woman, the Danguirs also excite Vegas patrons with their two-person wheel of death feats.

## Evansville event

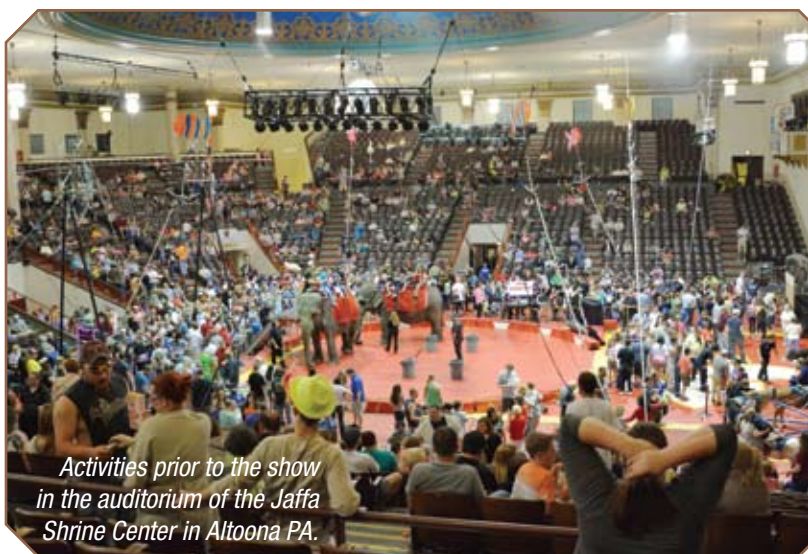
Billed as “one of America’s finest circuses,” Hadi Shrine Circus has its traditional Thanksgiving holiday weekend and 85<sup>th</sup> annual staging set for November 22-25 at Ford Center, Evansville IN. It will be the seventh consecutive Hadi Circus at Ford after the shrine played Evansville’s Roberts Stadium 56 straight years.

Declares the Hadi website <[www.hadishrinecircus.com](http://www.hadishrinecircus.com)>, “Of course, the success of the circus is dependent on the animals. All are treated like family – ‘like gold’. They receive top-quality care, including annual check-ups and vaccinations. In addition, some of the dogs that perform during the show were rescued from shelters. ... get your kids to the show one-hour early for the opportunity to ride the elephants, ponies and camels.”





*Why are we showing you two long mounts?  
Because they are still here. And Hadi Shrine  
is the place to see one – in Evansville IN.*



*Activities prior to the show  
in the auditorium of the Jaffa  
Shrine Center in Altoona PA.*

Hadi's producer will again be the Las Vegas NV-based Jordan World Circus, headed by Jody Jordan.

## Busy Billy

The circus/entertainment producing outfit of Billy Martin Presents is experiencing "a wonderful (2018) season – response has been excellent" for this year's engagements to conclude with the November 9-11 Ansar Shrine Circus at Bos Center, Springfield IL. So declared Billy Martin, who, with wife Angela, heads the aforementioned business.

Reported Billy, "We opened our 2018 season with 14 weeks of the Cole All-Star Circus (an indoor winter/early spring tour of mainly single date stands in New York and Pennsylvania). It was the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary tour of the show, founded by (the late) James M. Cole in 1938. It was also my 41<sup>st</sup> year on the show. We then blended in three Shrine circus dates – Altoona, Kingston (both PA) and Binghamton (NY) before starting the Adventureland Park run (in the Des Moines area of Altoona IA) from Memorial Day through Labor Day."

The park's half-hour circus, presented under the Lopez Family's leased big top, featured Benito and Dulce Aguilar, juggling and quick costume change routines; specialty contortionist Kevin Sadrak; aerial wheel stunter Paul Cifuentes; and lyra aerialists Angela Martin and Veronica.

Martin, in association with Wayne McCary, produced the previously noted Big Top Circus at the August 3-19 Indiana State Fair. That venue occurred in a tent rented from Circus Sarasota of the Circus Arts Conservatory of Sarasota (FL). The Sarasota top was also used for a second

successive year and like numbered Martin circus production at the September 14-30 Eastern States Exposition (The Big E), West Springfield MA (Tanbark Topics, November/December, 2017).

But before The Big E, Billy Martin Presents (BMP) was busy in other USA areas. They included a single ring circus in a leased tent from the Giovanni Anastasini Family for six shows daily at the August 8-19 Erie County Fair, Hamburg NY, where two programs were offered, with acts alternating every other performance.

Talent at Hamburg consisted of Luciano Anastasini's three numbers – comedy dogs, low wire and diabolo; aerial lyra and comic trampoline turns by the Valla Bertini Family; the Carlos McIntyre Family's three presentations – high wire pair, unicycling and hula hoops; and ex-Big Apple Circusite John Kennedy Kane as ringmaster.

Again in association with McCary and using a Ramos Bros. Circus tent, BMP produced a September 6-16 format at the Utah State Fair, Salt Lake City. Featured were the Urias Troupe with steel globe motorcyclists and hand-balancing skills; high riding specialty unicyclist Wesley Williams; chiffons' aerialist Kevin Sadrak; Luciano Anastasini's comedy canines; the Anastasini Bros. Risley duo; comedian Renaldo (Al Calienes); and ringmaster Joseph D. Bauer, Jr.

The 69<sup>th</sup> annual Syria Shrine Circus from September 14-16 at the PPG Paints Arena, Pittsburgh PA, was also in the BMP fold, with attractions including a big cage display of white lions and tigers, camels, big and little horses and globe motorcyclists – all from Circus Pages, headed by Jorge Pages.

Among other Syria performers were the Pork Chop Revue of trained pigs and

mixed animals of Les Kimes, Jr.; Human Cannonball Brian Miser working as a flaming arrow; Carson & Barnes Circus Asian elephants directed by Tim Frisco; and the Chicago Boyz acrobatic troupe. Spider Man, of Marvel Comics' fame, was also present at the Pittsburgh circus.

For the Big E circus, Martin's entertainers included Bello Nock's William Tell bow and arrow/balloon spoof and an aerial double wheel; The Cortes' flying trapeze; Ivan Arestov on the cyr wheel; Hans Klose trained dogs and huge pigs; the King Charles Troupe of unicycling basketballers; music by keyboard instrumentalist Larry Stout; and the rotund Kane, ringmaster.

Using an Anastasini big top, BMP alternated circus and Chinese acrobats' formats for performances at the October 11-21 North Carolina State Fair, Raleigh. The circus showcased Valla Bertini unicycles; Benito Aguilar, juggler, and wife, Dulce, aerial hair suspension; Ivan Arestov, cyr wheel; Hans Klose's dogs and pigs; and jar/vase balancer Gui Meng.

In starting this segment about BMP, we tagged it "Busy Billy." After the foregoing, wouldn't you agree it's mighty true? 🍷



*Marvelous  
Martin at the  
Microphone*

photos on this page by John Wells



# Tanbark Topics

Continued  
from page 61



## Saving shows

That September 14-16 Syria Shrine Circus had to overcome legal obstacles before playing Pittsburgh. Allegheny County (PA) Common Pleas Court Judge Joseph James temporarily curtailed a new Pittsburgh law on animal treatment that threatened cancellation of the September performances.

Litigation occurred when Shriners last May filed a court complaint over a Pittsburgh law enacted late last year that banned using any painful instruments, or instruments that could be painful, on or around wild and exotic animals. Proponents of the measure cited such animal control tools as whips, electric prods or elephant hooks.

Judge James stayed enforcement against the circus provided it permitted "reasonable inspection and monitoring" for wildlife at the event.

Shriners' attorneys in court filings attempted to block the animal treatment rule permanently, while stating that it jeopardized the Syria Circus, and that the Shrine had already contracted for its September shows.

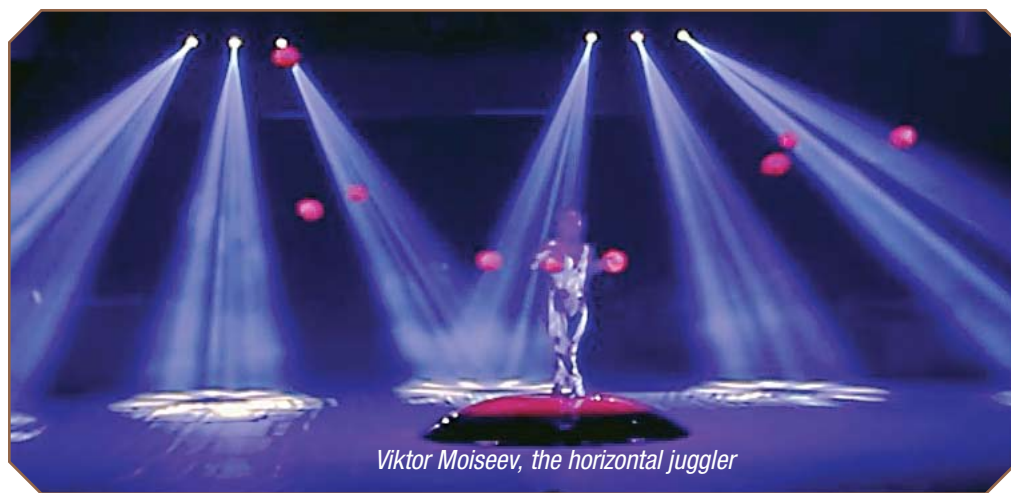
Framed by City Council President Bruce Kraus (D), the legislation was approved in a 6-3 council vote last December 19 and signed into law by Mayor Bill Peduto (D) December 28.

Commenting on Judge James' temporary ruling, Kraus said after this year the Shriners "can bring the circus and everything they wish to bring with it – except for animals."

## Flipping feats



Guinness World Record by the Anastasini Brothers



Viktor Moiseev, the horizontal juggler

Another circus-generated Guinness World Record (GWR)! Last November, during the Big Apple Circus's New York City run, the Anastasini Brothers as two Risley stunters, posted a GWP mark by executing 32 full rotations in 30 seconds. Understander Giuliano foot-flipped back somersaulting brother Fabio into the record-setting attainment.

## Apple aces

Russian imports and a holdover, starring but expanded flying trapeze troupe will be among features with the new edition of Big Apple Circus (BAC), which released some details about its 2018-2019 talent roster as this column went to press in late August.

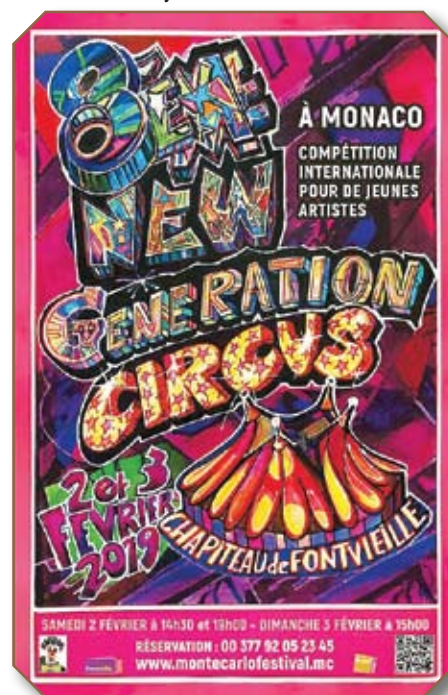
Heralding quadruple somersaulter Ammed Garcia, the Flying Tunizianis will boost their single frame rigging, as seen in the 2017-2018 show, to a double wide apparatus for BAC's 41<sup>st</sup> season.

Russian contributions to the program include the Desire in Flight aerial straps skills of Melvina Abakarova and her husband, Valeriy Sychev. Their act won a gold clown (first place) award at the 2014 Monte Carlo International Circus Festival and appeared with BAC in 2015 and 2012.

Making his American debut will be Russia's Viktor Moiseev, who bills himself as a "horizontal juggler," described by some as a juggler of pendulum balls. Starting his unique specialty with three balls, perhaps a bit smaller in size than soccer balls, and increasing them to nine, his spherical implements are suspended at eye height by nearly invisible strings attached to an overhead control point. YouTube, the video-sharing website, has coverage of Moiseev's act, which has been seen in Cirque du Soleil productions at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPY1zFD2ipg>>

## Festival facts

A tented presentation, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Monte Carlo International Circus Festival, will be from January 10-27 in the principality of Monaco. The event's companion staging, the eighth New Generation Festival, a competition for young circus artists, will occur February 2-3.



## Sarasota scene

Rehearsals are scheduled from February



11-14 with Circus Sarasota's 22<sup>nd</sup> winter season big top performances set for Feb. 15-March 15. ➡

*Bill Hall*



# Preserving animals in the circus

by Sarah Conley, Animal Welfare Committee Chair

## Joy

Maybe it's the fact that I live in California, or maybe it's the direction of society, but it seems that we keep finding ways to outlaw joy. Always done in the name of unspecified and unproven assertions, laws attacking taking a joyful ride through the park in a horse-drawn carriage are proposed, choosing just the right dog breed for your family is vilified, finishing your day with a perfectly grilled steak is derided, and the circus has been run out of town. Enjoyment seems to be the prerequisite for a new kind of villainy.

Animal rights terrorists have long asserted that animals doing something for human enjoyment is abusive, but have you ever considered why? If the action, behavior, trick, experience, etc is safe and healthy for the animal, what difference does it make if a human enjoys it? The animal certainly does not care, save for their desire to please the one human who trains and cares for them. In fact, if multiple humans enjoy the animal's actions, it is actually a good thing. Strangers are now more invested in caring for that animal and others like it. Monetizing that enjoyment facilitates a better standard of living for the animal, too. Yet somehow every time a child laughs or an audience squeals when a dog falls over to play dead, that's abuse.

Outlawing joy is not limited to just the animal world. Political activists looking for easy issues to win political capital corrupt innocuous things so they can then score a win by "solving" these new, insidious problems. Some communities are considering banning birthday party balloons to prevent the few floating off into the sky and causing pollution. In California, possessing a swirly, crazy straw is now more verboten than using a hypodermic needle.

Schools can no longer celebrate scholarly achievement for fear of hurting the feelings of the kids who did not score quite as high. And do not dare to make the lethal social faux-pas of using gender specific language surrounding the birth of a new baby, lest you be classified as some form of "ist". There is no sector of our lives where joy is not under attack.

Don't get me wrong, there is room for reform and improvement in all sectors of life. Inclusiveness, being good stewards of the earth, and respect are key elements of a responsible and well-mannered society. Yet, is forcing dogma by banning innocuous and nonviolent behavior really the best way to shape society? Isn't it just another form of "negative reinforcement" – the much-denounced element of training? It seems to me that just like good training, there is a positive way to encourage the same behavior that makes the trainee want to offer up the trick. Establishing that connection and synergy is joyful, and spreads beyond the trainer-trainee relationship to those who see, experience, and feel it. Sounds like good circus animal trainers to me.

Once again society has something to learn from the circus. Circus communities have long been on the leading edge of acceptance of all walks of life, all races and all creeds. If you are "with it", you're in. Our culture needs to remember joy and to defend and fight for it. With the animals gone, a jumbo amount of joy has left the tent, but more joy is being stripped away every single day. Perhaps the circus' embodiment of pure joy is why poet E. E. Cummings wrote:

"Damn everything but the circus! ...damn everything that is grim, dull, motionless, unrisking, inward turning, damn everything that won't get into the circle, that won't enjoy. That won't throw its heart into the tension, surprise, fear and delight of the circus, the round world, the full existence..."  
Fight for joy. Fight for circus. We need it. 📌



*Sarah and Tai sharing the joy of taking a selfie.*

## SUPPORT- PROTECT- ENJOY CIRCUS ANIMALS



Help the OABA maintain the right of Circuses and USDA licensed animal exhibitors to provide Americans with educational performances of exotic animals.

**Contribute a minimum of \$25 to the OABA Circus Fund to receive your NEW 2016-2017 Elephant Pin**

Your contribution will be listed in the next issue of the ShowTime magazine. Donations of \$50 or more will be listed in ALL issues of the campaign year.

Make your check payable to: OABA Circus Fund and send it to:  
OABA, 1035 S. Semoran Blvd., Suite 1045A, Winter Park, FL 32792

**"Luke" is a male Asian Elephant, age 24, owned by Two Tails Ranch, Williston, FL.**



# Tents & TOPS

Conducted by  & Members  Mardi Wells

## *John Ringling North II/Steve and Ryan Tent*

text and photos from Thom and Pat Stevenson

We received an email from President Jan Biggerstaff back in early May asking us to take the opportunity to tell you what our tent has been doing.

Well, this Tent has been busy sitting in seats of tents in a tristate



*The Freestate Clowns who laid a wreath at the memorial.*

area. Whenever the group goes to a circus, we take a goodie basket full of snacks. We have been to several Shrine shows with Jim Hamid, Circus Spectacular, Loomis Brothers, Garden Brothers, Zerbini Family Circus, Lewis and Clark, Big Apple, UniverSoul, Kelly Miller and of course Circus World.

We happened to be in Ephrata PA in a Dairy Queen, saw a Zerbini poster, plugged in the address and flew out of the DQ to catch up with some good friends. (We did return to buy ice cream.) It is amazing that every circus has a large audience and mostly



*Skootchee and Pat at Circus World*



*Ryan Combs (left) and Steve Copeland in their new Freestate Alley Shirts*

straw houses.

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, the Tent which also has members in the Freestate Clown Alley drove to Tyrone PA for the Walter L. Main Train Wreck Memorial. Suzie O'Brian is the gracious host and coordinator. There were family members of one of the deceased that traveled from Hawaii. The local theater group wrote, produced and performed *An Unscheduled Stop* based on the event in 1893.

While Kelly Miller Circus traveled through Maryland, we provided snacks, a full course chicken dinner and Patty Cake and Poppo were invited into the ring with Kozee and EZ. What a fun night!

Then it was off to Baraboo WI for the Circus Historical Society. We met Donna Lee Dicksson who is an avid photographer, historian and circus fan. Donna took pictures and we frolicked with Steve and Pamela Copeland and Louie (what a cutie); Ryan and Tatiana Combs and their extraordinary children Abrianna and Nico; and Ryan Easley. While we love circus history, we also love watching a traditional circus up close from the box seats!

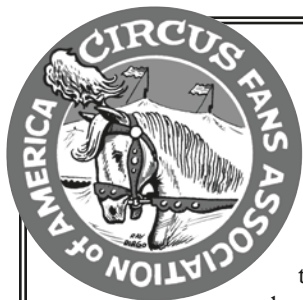
The Freestate Clown Alley participated in the Big Top Parade in Baraboo but, of course, Armando's divas won first place.

The group is just back from participating in the Miss America Parade. Bump a nose!



*Skootchee in Baraboo Big Top Parade*





## CFA officers elections

### *Nominating petition for terms beginning May 1, 2019*

All officers are elected at large and do not represent a specific area. For this election one president-elect, one vice-president and five trustees will be elected. Trustees serve a four-year term and can serve multiple terms but must be placed on the ballot. Candidates may nominate themselves or be placed in nomination by another CFA member. All nominations must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2018. Mail nominating petitions to Tim Tegge, PO Box 661, Baraboo, WI 53913-0661.

Use the space below and make photo copies if necessary for additional nominations.

#### **I wish to place in nomination for CFA President-Elect:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ CFA member # \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Self nomination Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_ CFA member # \_\_\_\_\_

#### **I wish to place in nomination for Vice-President:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ CFA member # \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Self nomination Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_ CFA member # \_\_\_\_\_

#### **I wish to place in nomination for CFA Trustee:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ CFA member # \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Self nomination Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_ CFA member # \_\_\_\_\_





# Circus Fans Association of America

## Application for Membership

Fiscal Year May 1, 2018 through April 30, 2019

www.circusfans.org

Please remit by check (drawn on U.S. bank) or money order payable to:

**Circus Fans Association of America**

Mail application and payment to: Cheryl Deptula  
CFA Secretary-Treasurer  
3660 Morningside Way, #105  
Lorain, OH 44053  
U.S.A.  
deptulascircus@centurytel.net

### REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

If you live in the USA, Canada or Mexico, select the month you are joining CFA and enter your Regular Membership dues amount on the form below.

May, June, July, August	\$50
September, October	\$45
November, December	\$40
January, February	\$35
March, April	\$65 *

\* Includes next year's dues May 1<sup>st</sup> thru April 30<sup>th</sup>, if you are making application in March or April of the current year.

- ☐ **Regular Membership** includes The White Tops Subscription  
➤ If The White Tops is to be sent to Canada or Mexico, add \$25.00 for postage

Optional Contributing Memberships to General Fund

- ☐ Ringmaster Status (Regular membership above + \$5)  
☐ Equestrian Status (Regular membership above + \$25)  
☐ Producer Status \*\*\* (Regular membership above + \$75)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Print Applicant's Name (First, MI, Last)

- ☐ **Family Membership** - without The White Tops Subscription  
(Spouse, Parent or Adult Child age 22 & over of Regular Member)

\$ 10.00

Family Applicant's Name (First, MI, Last)

- ☐ **Youth Membership** includes The White Tops Subscription  
(Ages - Birth to 21 yrs.)

\$ 30.00

Youth Applicant's Name (First, MI, Last)  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **Youth Membership** without The White Tops Subscription  
(Ages - Birth to 21 yrs.)

\$ 10.00

Youth Applicant's Name (First, MI, Last)  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **International Membership** includes The White Tops Subscription  
(Resides outside U.S.A., and includes postage.)

\$ 75.00

International Applicant's Name (First, MI, Last)

- ☐ **Institutional Membership** includes The White Tops Subscription

\$ 70.00

Company Name

Total Amount Enclosed

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: Fees other than for Regular membership are set for the fiscal year, regardless of date joined**

Mailing Address of Member(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

City, State, Zip

Occupation

Phone

E-Mail Address

Were you ever a member of CFA? YES ☐ NO ☐

Signature of Applicant

Date

Name of Sponsor and CFA# OR mark "CFA Website"

Gift Membership From: NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET, CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Secretary/Treasurer, Date

THE CIRCUS FAN WILL DO HIS UTMOST TO CREATE A TRUE UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL, HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL VALUES OF THE CIRCUS. MEMBERS WILL ABIDE BY THE MORE EXPLICIT CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE CFA.



## Wayne McCary Tent celebrates 20 years

text by Ken Sopelak with photos by Jan Sopelak

On July 7, 2018 fans from at least four states gathered in Dalton MA to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wayne McCary Tent. The Tent was founded by Dan McGinnis and close friends. It has attracted members from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York,

New Jersey, Maine, Rhode Island and others.

The Tent was named in honor of Wayne McCary who was former CEO and President of the Eastern States Exposition for over 20 years. It was Wayne who brought the annual circus to New England's largest Fair, the Big E. It was so popular that its run was eventually extended for the entire length of the Fair! Wayne continues to be active in the circus



Wayne McCary

world as a devoted CFA Fan, an independent circus producer, serves on several circus related boards, and is a sought out mentor by many circus professionals.

Each year the Tent hosts three or more major events. Members gather in the spring for a luncheon meeting and attend the Melha Shrine Circus (Hamid) in West Springfield MA. The summer gathering is held in Dalton MA. This popular meeting consists of a luncheon or BBQ followed by a circus sponsored by the Lions Club. Over the years it has featured Vidbel, Roberts Bros., Clyde Beatty Cole Bros., Carson & Barnes, L E Barnes, Cole Bros., Kelly Miller and the Zerbini Family Circus. A familiar sight at the annual event is performers and tent members sitting by the pond in between shows.

This year's meeting was a bigger event. Instead of



Zerbini Family (l-r): Letty, Alain, Julian, Darinka

a luncheon, a catered four course delicious meal was served at the American Legion Hall. Each table was decorated with beautiful red roses centerpieces donated by CFA member JP Licari. Great speakers entertained those in attendance. Joe Barney of Center Ring Productions was one featured speaker. Joe has extensive



Zerbini Circus



(L-R) Dan McGinnis, Joe Barney, Alex Barney

background working as a circus producer, ringmaster, magician, clown, and Macy's Santa Claus! Joe spoke about the future of the circus and what circuses must do to survive in today's environment. Alex Barney, Joe's son, was the second speaker. Alex was a top notch clown for Ringling Bros., Ronald McDonald, and is currently working behind the scenes with the new Big Apple Circus. He talked about last year's first tour and the new upcoming tour.

Wayne McCary thanked the Tent for honoring him for 20 years. He also brought us up-to-date on two of his own productions. He mentioned that many circuses are having a good year which put a smile on everyone's face.

President Dan McGinnis thanked members for their help and mentioned that he was proud to serve as president. He reminded us of our fall gathering at the Big E (Eastern States Exposition) featuring Billy Martin's All Star Circus and Ian Garden and Ryan Henning's Camel Kingdom.

It was a great anniversary celebration and we hope there will be many more! 🎪



## Tents & TOPS & Members

*Adler/Binder Tent hosts*

### Pizza party on Kelly Miller Circus

by Maxine House with photos by Paul Gutheil

A warm, sunny day on a grassy circus lot – what more can a fan ask for? How about hosting a pizza party for the performers and staff? That's exactly what members of the Felix Adler/Paul Binder Tent #12 enjoyed on June 16, 2018 on the Kelly Miller Circus lot in Little Ferry NJ.

Frank Vopasek, an A/B tent member, had booked the date for the Little Ferry Hose Company #1. This group had successfully sponsored circuses before, but this time they pulled out all the stops. Frank led the promotion complete with a large billboard on SR 46 and banners sold to local sponsors – including the A/B Tent. The circus tent was nicely filled for all of the performances during this successful two-day stand.

On a three-pack Saturday, fans arrived early to set up a hospitality tent on the midway where the tent's banners were displayed and to organize the serving area behind the tent. Between afternoon performances they served pizza, fruit, desserts, and cold beverages to the performers, staff, and fans. It was a rewarding time for all fans attending: Jack Belles, Nora and Russ Balliet, Paul Gutheil, Dick and Susan Nelson, Allen Kirk, Frank and Helen Vopasek, Maxine House, JP Cunningham, new member Jeff Babey, and tent guests Barb and Don Kowell.

The date was so successful that the Hose Company is planning to book the circus for the 2019 season. Frank is also hoping to obtain a calliope for the occasion. We fans can hope for another pizza party, too! 🍕



Above, L to R are Nora Balliet, Don Kowell, honorary ringmaster Frank Vopasek, Barbara Kowell, Jeff Babey, JP Cunningham, Maxine House, Russ Balliet, and Jack Balliet posing by the welcome tent with its CFA banners.

Below, L to R are Nora Balliet, Maxine House, JP Cunningham, and Russ Balliet are ready to serve the pizza in the backyard. (MH's camera)



Sept/Oct 2018