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February 18, 1980

Number 7

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## HOTLINE

### VICTOR GAONA INJURED IN ACCIDENT

... by Harry L. Graham

His sons Tito and Richie perform the triple somersault on the flying trapeze, but Victor Gaona unintentionally went them one better by doing the Big Trick in his car on Jan. 19th.

While driving his classic 1931 Model A Ford on Highway 27, three miles north of Circus World, near Haines City, Fla., he was rear-ended by an 18 wheel semi-rig.

"It was like a bomb hit me," said the patriarch and former catcher of the famed Flying Gaonas. "My car flew up in the air about 10 feet and somersaulted three times". Gaona suffered multiple injuries and his like-new car was demolished.

Victor said the truck wiped out 10 orange trees and the driver was knocked out. Gaona was taken to the hospital, where he was doctored for cuts and bruises on his arms, legs, knees, back, chest and head. "They took 18 stitches in my left buttock," he said, "and I lost about two pints of blood."

He quit his job as manager of the participation acts at Circus World after the accident, and said he would move his trailer house back to Venice and live at his home there.

"I may take a trip to Mexico in a few days," he said, "and I'll probably visit my kids on the Monte Carlo Circus in Japan later this spring. I feel okay now, but I'm going to take it easy for awhile."

THE CIRCUS REPORT is compiled and edited by Don Marcks, 525 Oak St., El Cerrito, Calif. 94530 - Phone: 415 - 525 - 3332.

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## Acts

The program presented by the Bill Brickle produced "Wonderland Circus" which is on tour in the east, features:

Circus Overture by Wilma Rench; Welde's Uncaged Leopards; Clowns with The Washerwoman, Miss Linda Karl, web; Paulette's Peerless Puppies; Clowns, in Tug-O-War; The Jeffery Duo, aerial cradle; Chandler & Co., illusions; Bill Brickle's Poodle Fantasy; Freddie White, the Playboy of the Air;

The show is produced by Bill Brickle; Jack Rench is concession manager; Jeff White, prop boss; Bill Brickle, producing clown, assisted by Mark Harris; Marc Barr, animal supt.

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# SPECIAL

## RINGLING'S CLOWNS

... by GEORGE N. BUKOTA

The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus closed a successful stand in Seattle on Sept. 23rd. The show, flashy and spectacular as ever, thrilled last-day audiences with two shows adjusted to accommodate moving-out day.

This year's show included 28 clowns, only a few of whom aren't graduates of RBBB's Clown College. This is Lou Jacob's 56th year with the show and Dwayne Thorpe's 32nd year, according to boss clown Frosty Little. "Speaking of years, this is my ninth year as boss clown," he said proudly.

Lou missed the Seattle engagement. He was hospitalized following a back injury during a performance in Portland, but rejoined the circus train in Seattle and was expected to be back in the show soon.

Frosty has revived the elaborate burning house gag, which Ringling hasn't used on the road in a decade, he said. The 3½ minute gag uses 22 clowns and includes six shots of smoke, two shotgun and four pistol blasts and three shots of fire, Frosty said. It took nine months to put the act together.

This gag lasted only a couple of weeks during the 1969 season because the house used was too big and complicated, Frosty said. He said he overcame those problems by designing a wood-covered, steel-frame house which collapses from 6 x 6 x 7½ ft. down to 6 x 6 x 3 ft. for travel.

Frosty said he hires three men - a carpenter, a painter and a handyman - during off-season to work on props for the show. The Red Unit clown alley can call on about 60-65 gags this year, he said.

Several Red Unit clowns help teach special courses at the Circus' Clown College. According to Frosty, they include: Jim Tinsman, two weeks teaching slaps and falls; Peggy Williams, three weeks teaching advance and female clowning;

Lou Jacobs, five weeks teaching general clowning and Fristy Little, three weeks teaching explosives, soap (pies, cakes, paint) and break-away and fly-away dummies.

Of the 4,000 applicants Ringling receives for clown college, about 60 per cent will be accepted any one year, Fristy said. Of those, only 15-25 will be offered jobs with the Ringling shows. The eight-week college is offered once a year.

Clown college graduates may receive one year contracts as Ringling apprentice clowns, Frosty said. After a three-year apprenticeship, they should have a set character and specialized acts, and are free to negotiate their own contracts with the show owners.

The current Ringling Red Unit has no tramp clowns, only white faces and augustes. When asked why, Frosty said, "Most of these clowns are too young for their faces to have developed the character needed to carry tramp make-up. If they tried to be tramps, most of them would look like kids trying to act like an old man. The older clowns already had their faces and characters set, and they don't want to switch to tramp."

"Most of the real good tramp clowns grew up during the 1930's when there were a lot of real tramps around the country. Most of those guys have retired or are close to it now," he said.

The Clown College was opened when Ringling decided to start a second unit. There are only about 200 professional circus clowns in America today, Frosty said, although there are about 10,000 amateur clowns across the country. The Ringling organization employs nearly 80 clowns in the Red, Blue and Circus World shows, he said. "The Clown College has been the salvation of circus clowning in America," he added.

"We're looking for people who want to be a clown, who really want it. We have a lot of kids now who consider this almost a 9 to 5 job. But for some of us older clowns, the circus and clowning aren't just a job, they're a way of life. Clowning is our life, not our work."

(Continued on Page 26)

# Bruno Attractions

AGENCY

3410 Livingston Street  
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# Show Dates

## Brickle's Wonderland Circus

Jan. 28 Kingston, SC  
 29 Lane  
 30 Manning  
 31 Olanter  
 Feb. 1 Lynchburg  
 4 Bishopville  
 5-8 Lake City  
 11 Camden  
 12 Lamar  
 13 Ellicott  
 14 Waltersboro  
 15 Manning  
 18 Timmons ville

## Carden-Johnson Circus

Feb. 19-24 Milwaukee, Wisc.

## Garden Bros. Circus

Feb. 21-24 Toronto, Ont.

## Hamid-Morton Circus

Feb. 22-24 Binghampton, NY

## Ringling-Barnum - Blue Unit

Feb. 20-24 Binghampton, Ala.

## Ringling-Barnum - Red Unit

Feb. 19-20 Savannah, Ga.

## Royal Lichtenstein Circus

Feb. 18-20 Tacoma, Wash.  
 21 Lynwood  
 22 Seattle

## ----- MAGIC -----

### Andre Kole's World of Illusion

Feb. 18 Palo Alto, Calif.  
 19 Hayward  
 20 Berkeley  
 21 Chico  
 22-23 Richmond

### Leckvold the Magician

Feb. 22 Mt. Lake Terrace, Wash.  
 22 Renton  
 23 Everett

### Felix Snipes - Magic/ESP Shows

Feb. 22-23 Sarasota, Fla.

## ---- OTHER DATES ----

### Harlem Globetrotters

Feb. 19 New Haven, Conn.

### Kaye Hollywood Elephants

to Feb. 24 Homestead, Fla.

### Marcel Marceau - Mime Performer

Feb. 22 Omaha, Nebr.

### Massenkoff Russian Folk Festival

Feb. 22 San Rafael, Calif.

### Mr. Sensation - Cloud Swing

Feb. 21-24 Toronto, Ont.

### The Sikorskys - Jugglers

to Feb. 26 Santo Domingo, D.R.

### Circus Vargas

Feb. 15-20 Commerce, Calif.  
 21-25 Carson

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HOW ABSOLUTELY SHOCKING that Nairobi Police are now convinced 69 yr. old Naturalist JOY ADAMSON, author of the best selling book "Born Free" (about ELSA the LIONESS) was not mauled and killed by a lion as first thought but was murdered. An investigation revealed there was "little blood at the site where Mrs. Adamson's body was discovered, that there were no claw marks on her body, and that her car had been stolen."

Mrs. Adamson was killed in the Shaba Game Reserve about 175 miles north of Nairobi where she was conducting experiments on leopard behavior. A full investigation into her death is underway and an autopsy has been performed, the results of which are not expected to be made public.

Mrs. Adamson wrote many books about her work and all income from them, including the motion picture and the song "Born Free" went into the Elsa Wild Animal Fund, which financed conservation and educational projects.

OPENINGS THIS MONTH: Garden Bros. (Toronto), Hamid-Morton (Hartford), M&M Int. (Rochester), Carden-Johnson (Milwaukee), Sam T. Polack (Louisville), Hubler Int. (Mentor). Off and running in January were Ringling's twin units, Circus Vargas, Royal Hanneford and Hubert Castle, newly revamped by TARZAN ZERBINI with three spots overlapping - Saginaw, Flint and Grand Rapids. I'm asked, almost daily, what I think the new season will be like and I honestly wish I could make a safe prediction, but I can't. If I could set myself up as such an oracle I could make a fortune.

HERTA and JOHN CUNEO are back from a glorious two weeks vacation in Hawaii. Herta hung on with bated breath hopeful that nothing would happen at winter quarters to prevent their leaving. CORKY CRISTIANI BOWES and her husband are also back home after vacationing in Florida where Corky visited family and friends and where they caught the opening of Ringling Red.

AGATHA CHRISTIE addicts will be happy to know that British Film Corp. EMI, producers of the successful Hercule Poirot Films "Orient Express" and "Nile" are readying three new films starring ANGELA LANSBURY as Miss Marple. The first, "The Mirror Crack'd", starts filming in England in March when the actress departs

her long-running Broadway hit "Sweeney Todd" Miss Marple was last portrayed on the screen by the late MARGARET RUTHERFORD.

CLOSEUPS: HAL HAVILAND opened his season playing the Hartford Shrine Circus engagement, with his paper-tearing and trick pony numbers. . . RON KELROY caught the Ashton, Sole and Royal Circuses in Australia before traveling on to New Zealand and Japan. . . THE GREAT SEBASTIAN presented his unusual "bullet catch" act at Circus Circus in Las Vegas to great success and has embellished the presentation for upcoming engagements. With him is assistant DANA and Dana's new wife. . . GEORGE HANNEFORD was released from the hospital at Christmas time and though somewhat weakened expects to be back in action by the time this sees print. . . Nonagenarian DAME KATE HANNEFORD, rivaling bionic Godmother AURELIA HALL for indestructibility, pulled a muscle in her shoulder in January but pooh-poohed the injury with her usual cheerfulness and said that a little pain at her late, great age is necessary to feel alive. . . GERARD SOULES will not tour, after all, with Royal Hanneford but cancelled, according to producer Hanneford, to appear with another, unnamed show. . . VICKI HANNEFORD visited with L.A. Hostess with the Mostess BETTY ESCALANTE who dashed thither and yon during her recent Sarasota excursion catching up with her many friends and carrying home to L.A. reams of gossip and dirt. Betty, looking incredibly youthful, is a great collector of both. I wonder if she, too, might be writing a book (everyone else seems to be). . . Meanwhile on the west coast TOMMY BENTLEY and CHUCK CLANCY hosted their annual Xmas Ball, festooned with show folks and not to be outdone CLIFF VARGAS hosted a second. Rumors are that Cliff has rented a house in L.A. and, since his show plays for practically months in the area will commute - BUT THAT is ONLY a rumor. . . CORKY CRISTIANI BOWES and her husband plan a trip to Ireland in June and plan to visit me in London. . . Coming over also during the season to see how I am weathering England's clime will be my ex-business manager BOB REED, a successful businessman in L.A. and hopefully HERTA CUNEO who looks for the merest excuse to go simply - anywhere! . . .

(Continued on Page 24)

## In Memoriam

**RICHARD HEARNE (70)** a circus acrobat who was known as "Mr. Pastry" died in Sept. 1979 at his home near Maidstone, Kent, England. He was born to circus parents and started his show business career as a hand balancer. Later he became interested in pantomime, musical comedy and television, where he had his own series. He retired in 1970 in protest of the increasing smut in show business. In 1970 he made an appearance at the Palladium. He was a featured performer with Chipperfields Circus in the 1950's and was involved in a lawsuit with the circus when a chimp bit him.

**JACK THUM (54)** a clown who won national attention with his fight against cancer, died on Jan. 9th in Chicago. Despite his health problems he continued to perform up until a few days before his death. Survivors include his wife, Shirlee, and a daughter who works as "Jackie the Clown."

**LUCILLE WATTON (63)** former circus organist died Jan. 15th at Tarkio, Mo. She had been with many shows including Hunt Bros., Al G. Kelly-Miller Bros., Ben Davenport, Cristiani-Wallace Bros., Sells & Gray, Carson & Barnes, Circus Bartok, Harry Beck's Circorama and Century 21 Shows. Survivors include two daughters, Delores Fletcher of Tarkio, Mo., and Lillian Maguire, of Bessemer, Ala.

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## SPECIAL

There is a syndicated program called "Kidsworld" which is a new program for kids. The local NBC station here in Grand Rapids runs the show. They ask children to send in suggestions on topics of interest. Brad's idea was on our local shrine circus which Castle-Zerbini produced this year. They not only selected Brad's idea, but also asked Brad to be the reporter.

On Jan. 18th, Brad and the WOTV film crew with a mini camera went to the civic auditorium and there he interviewed Tarzan Zerbini and Jeanette Rix (Rix Bears), as well as Ed DeYoung, chairman of the circus here. Brad also taped his comments on the circus and his love for it.

The film was shown locally on Jan. 26-28. The show is produced by the Behrens Company of Miami, Fla.

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# REPORT

## HUBERT CASTLE CIRCUS

The program for the Hubert Castle Circus, playing at Saginaw, Mich. (Jan. 11-15) lists the following acts:

Overture; Circus Space Disco Production; The Space Angels; Girl Changed to Lion; Tarzan Zerbini, wild animals; Clowns; Aerial display with Miss Stella, Miss Maya, The Berans, The Brauns, Miss Debby, Miss Lilian; Marie France, Canine stars; Jorge Rosell and his Unpredictable Auto; The Marhal Camels and Llamas; Baron and Miss Patty (Lipizzan horse); Clowns; Becky & Maya, Martin Lamberti, Les Michels, balancing acts; Trapeze acts Sr. Juan, Sr. Felipe, Sr. Venicio; Clowns; Ray, Michel & Yolanda, Sampson, The Lambertis, jugglers; the Hubert Castle Circus Elephants; Intermission; The Zercoffs, comedy voltige riders; The Flying Vasquez, flying trapeze act; Clowns; The Dionnes and The Dynamic Berans, perch acts; The Riding Zerbini Family, riding act; Mlle. Jacqueline, on the Flying Saucer; Captain Circus, King of the Dare-Devils; Finale featuring Creatures of the Universe.

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# Acts

The following talent was booked through Aman-  
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Circus under the Big Top, produced by Eddie  
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Las Verdus - rolling globes  
Barrie Sloan's Parade Characters  
Dime Wilson - clown alley  
Semon's Chimps

Erik and Bobbi's Canine Revue  
The Flying Lanes - flying trapeze

Also set to appear were: Bonnie Bale, cloud  
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... by LLOYD E. JONES

Toby Sanders has had his book "How to be a Complete Clown" published by Stein and Day. This is a big 6½ x 9 in. book, which is hard bound with a color dust jacket and photo. It sells for \$9.95 (postage is 81c and insurance is an extra 50c - plus Californians must add 60c for sales tax).

The book has 270 pages, with an index and a glossary, a full bibliography and an article by magician Tom Ogden on how to handle audience member on stage, etc. There is a magically slanted directory as well.

This book is full of history, problems, performing and branches of the art. There is much usable material, some with original twists, as well as ones you've used or read about before.

However, your reviewer feels that the rankst beginner to the stable pro can find much of value here. Mr. Sanders with the clown's point of view and has been a pro for years as well as teaching clowning in various locations.

A good buy.

RBBB RED UNIT ... by Llenray J. Yarnell

The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Red Unit, 109th edition, is out on the road for the second half of their tour. I saw the show in Venice, Fla., and there have been some changes from last year.

The program is as follows: Opening Spec; Gunther Gebel-Williams, tigers (18); Dolly Jacobs and Duo Evelyn, aerial acts; Amazing Leaps Over Elephants; Wally Naughtin, bears; Rudi Lenz, chimps and Mickey Antalek, chimps; the Clown Firehouse; Circus Can Can aerial ballet featuring Marguerite Michele, hair hang; three rings of liberty horses presented by Gunther Gebel-Williams, his wife Sigrid and daughter Tina; Clowns; The Carrillo Brothers, high wire; Circus Toyland Spec, ending with Gunther Gebel-Williams riding an elephant with a tiger; Intermission; Miguel Ayala, low wire; Gunther Gebel-Williams, leopards, panthers, pumas (1 counted 22); Clowns; Carl Wong, sway pole; Clown Car; Alicia's poodles; Anna's Dobermans; Lonas dogs; Clowns; Gypsy Fandango, elephant number with Gunther Gebel-Williams and family; Gunther and elephant teeterboard; Clowns; Teeterboard acts - The Otto, The Boitchanovi and The Malevolti; Clowns; Flying Farfans over both rings; Finale Spec, featuring Gunther Gebel Williams with Maharanee, a rare white tiger.

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# PEOPLE

DENISE and ANTONIO OLMEDA and PEPE will be working their horse acts with both Hubert Castle and Sam T. Polack Circuses this season.

RAY (Sabu) MOREAU was featured in a special article in the Buffalo (NY) Evening News on Jan. 7th. The article included a photo of Ray.

JERRY MERTENS, NORM BARNHART, JIM PRESSINGER and LARRY HANSON conduct a "Teaching Children by Magic" course at the Minnesota State University.

THE ZOPPEs - Roger, Dennis, Pam, Anita - will tour with the Golden State Rodeo Co. again this season, working dates in the West.

HARRY JENKINS, retired circus organist, who recently recovered from the flu, visited friends on Circus Vargas during that show's dates in the San Diego area.

JOE McMAHON is booking dates for the Great American Circus and the Hoxie Bros. Circus.

LARRY GREEN, authored a column in the



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Sarasota (Fla) Herald-Tribune on Feb. 3rd, about TRUDY and BILL STRONG and their "Circus Farm" which is a rest and recreation spot for circus performers and animals.

"Doc" MILTON BARTOK is working with the Florida Dept. of State who is planning to establish an "Authentic Medicine Show" which will tour some 50 cities in Florida.

## in the NEWS

### NEW POSTAGE FEE ?

The cost of mailing a letter will probably go up to 20c in early 1981, according to a U. S. Postal official.

Edward McCaffrey, the assistant postmaster general for rates and classifications, said "normal inflationary pressures" make such a rate increase necessary.

McCaffrey said at a meeting in Denver that a request for a rate increase will be made within the next few months. It usually takes about 10 months for rate increases to take effect, he added.

## in the NEWS

More than 700 people were left holding tickets to a non-existent concert at Jackson, Miss., after authorities learned that the group scheduled to appear knew nothing about the promotion.

"It obviously was just a fraudulent scam," says Ray Keys, chief investigator for the attorney general's office. A man calling himself Mike Johnson sold tickets for a concert of K. C. and the Sunshine Band for Feb. 7th, then left town with about \$5,100. The group was appearing in Orlando, Fla., on that night.

- + -

Sledders may be able to swish downhill in the nation's capitol without risking incarceration. But elephants, kiddie cars and unauthorized funeral processions must still keep their distance.

It's currently a misdemeanor crime - a violation of the United States Capitol Traffic Regulations - to "coast or slide on a sled" within the city's limits.

The same rule that bans sledding also makes it illegal for anyone to walk, lead or ride "any sheep, swine, cattle, horse, mule, goat, elephant, duck, goose or other undomesticated animal or insect or reptile" onto the Capitol grounds. Dogs can be walked in the vicinity of the Capitol but only on a leash "not exceeding four feet in length."

Rep. Andrew Maguire (Dem-NJ) is trying to get the law repealed, at least the part about the sledding. When his son was stopped by police for sledding on a Capitol hill he went to the House and threatened to introduce a bill to allow sledding unless some changes are made in the old laws.

April 1st, is the date set for Circus World's second Clown College auditions, offering a rare opportunity for prospective professional clowns to try their talents at mirth-making and comedy. Tuition-free, Clown College, was established in 1968 by Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus producer Irvin Feld. The course starts in the fall and runs for 10 weeks, at the campus near Sarasota.

## EMMETT KELLY, JR. THRILL SHOW

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# PEOPLE

**JIMMIE & MILLIE** had dates with Dwight Damon's Traveling Xmas Variety Shows, Circus for Fall River, Mass., through 20th Century Promotions in Providence, R.I., other dates for Oscar Swartz, Worcester, Mass., Gabe Maruca Entertainment Agency in Conn., Harry H. Herbert Agency, in Conn., Ford Theatrical Agency in Boston and Snider Productions in Manchester, N.H. They are now working weekend variety shows throughout New England thru May 1980.

**BILL BRICKLE** will tour with Hoxie Bros. Circus this year, presenting his Poodle Fantasy and directing Clown Alley.

**BOB KLEINMAN**, formerly with the Beatty-Cole Circus, is currently the Marketing Director for the Bugs Bunny in Space Stage Show.

**BUCKY STEELE** and **BARBARA TATA** will be presenting their animal acts at Montreal's Parc Safari Park during the summer season.

**RAY MAREK** and **PAULETTE BRAUN** both worked in the movie "Honky Tonk Freeway" which was recently filmed in Florida. They have also been signed to appear in the upcoming film "The Promoter".

The **TROLLEY MARIONETTES** will play the July 11-19 Heart of Illinois Fair in Peoria.

## BETTY WENDANY'S FUNS-A-POPPIN

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### CIRCUS QUIPS . . . . .

. . . . by **KARL J. BISCHOFF**

**TIMES NEVER CHANGE** — Caesar had a lot of expense with his show in the Coliseum — **THE LIONS ATE ALL THE "PROPHETS"**.

**SOME SHOW GROUNDS** were so muddy last season that one show had to dig a tunnel so the trucks could get on the lot.

**HOW ABOUT** the showman despite poor schooling made a fortune by hard work, met his untimely death swimming — just think said a friend, a rich man and yet he couldn't read or write — or swim said the widow.

**REMEMBER** you should be very interested in the future of show business because you will probably spend the rest of your life there.

**LIKE EVERY SPRING** — a very short story with a happy ending — **PAINTS AND BRUSHES**

## WASHINGTON TUBBS II



# REPORT

## JAMES M. COLE TV CIRCUS

... by Boyd Finch

The 42nd annual tour of the famous James M. Cole All Star TV Circus presented two fast moving shows at Afton, N. Y., on Jan. 26th.

The program was presented as follows: Miss Victoria, artistry on the Spanish web; the fast moving Billy Martin & Co., featuring the rola bola; Buttons the clown captivated children of all ages with the age-old photographer gag. This was followed by the unexpected and flashy entrance of Dorian Blake, a master magician who held the audience spellbound.

Again Buttons the clown appeared, this time with a balloon gag. A fast moving precision juggling routine was presented by the Bobby-Jane Duo. The "Acro Brats" held the audience captive while the young and talented group performed their routine for the first time ever before a circus audience. A very proud Mom and Dad Lang were in the backyard observing their children's performance.

Following intermission the Cyclonians of Rochester, NY, presented an outstanding unicycle act. This act replaced for the evening, the Fire Manipulation as presented by Suduro. The cap-

## On The Cover

Today's cover photo shows the Chinese Acrobatic Troupe which was featured at the Treasure Island Fair in San Francisco, Calif., during the 1940 season.

tivating and mystifying Blake & Co., made their final appearance of the evening, followed by Bongo and Miss Vicky with their usual excellent performance which held the audience in stitches. Billy Martin as "Bongo the Unruly Ape" succeeded in upsetting the crowd with his antics.

Plate spinning by Mr. Chili Pepper continued to hold the crowd with its loud cheering mood. The Langs in their finale, featured all six members of the family in an excellent trampoline act.

The show is owned and managed by James M. Cole, who is now in his 63rd year of show business. Billy Martin handled the announcing, and concessions were handled by the Sheffields.

## PEOPLE

HERMAN BRANDMILLER, CLARENCE HASTINGS (CFA's) and BILL SCHULZ, of the Circus World Museum, visited the Hubert Castle Circus at Flint, Mich.

## By Crane



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## In Memoriam

**THEIRA CRAWFORD** (Peggy Nelson) - A memorial service was held Sept. 16, 1979, for Theira Luella Crawford, 56, of Marysville, Calif. formerly of Caro, Mich. Creamation took place in Marysville, with burial at Fremont Township Cemetery.

Mrs. Crawford was born July 7, 1923, in Ionia County. She died suddenly Sept. 14th at Ride-out Hospital in Marysville, Calif. Surviving are her mother, Mrs. Carl (Jean) Fadie, of Tampa, Fla.; two daughters Mrs. David (Margery Joy) Russell of Midland, Mich. and Shirley Crawford of Marysville, Calif.; four sons, Michael Haley, Vassar, Mich., John Crawford, Marysville, Calif., Richard and Thomas Lockyer of Grand Rapids, Mich.; a sister Shirley M. McTaggart, of Gibsonton, Fla., and a brother Joseph Webster, of Riverview, Fla.

Peggy was one of the original members of "The Young Nelsons of the Original Nelson Family" acrobatic-risley act started by Paul Nelson on the Lewis Bros. Circus out of Jackson, Mich. in the late 1930's. Peggy was an all-around circus per-

## PEOPLE

**MARJORIE** and **DAVID HACKETT** recently visited both Ringling Units, as well as the Monte Carlo Circus at Circus World, Stebbin's Circus for Showfolks and they planned to catch the Eddie Zacchini Circus at the Florida State Fair as well as *Tommy Hanneford's show at Orlando.*

former, working elephants, a goat act, swinging ladder, etc. She became a risley kicker as well as a top mounter. She was on Lewis Bros., Hunt Bros., Cole Bros. and also appeared at parks and fairs (Including the Canadian National Exposition in Toronto; Kennywood Park in Pittsburgh, etc). When the Young Nelsons were booked by George A. Hamid agency. She was the granddaughter of Nora Hathaway a principal resin back rider who trooped with the old Ringling show, Hagenbeck-Wallace and Forepaugh & Sells Circuses.

She was very fond of snakes and worked the sideshow for the late King Bailie on Lewis Bros. and for Lou Barton on Hunt Bros., handling the big snakes for the bally. She also assisted Harris Reynolds in his tight wire performance with the Nelson Troupe.

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Mar. 7 - 9, Greenville, SC - Memorial Auditorium

**MAILBAG**

... from Hal Haviland

Regarding Eddy Ventura's recent plea for all of us to get letters to Congress and people in Washington about the proposed gas rationing.

I agree. Some people in high authority in the nation's Capitol are not too well informed about American independent show people or the need for national morale.

On my way south this month, I intend to stop and personally see some people on the hill about keeping our wheels turning, too.

So, the least the rest of the industry can do is let those 535 Congress people know independent show people are not "orphans".

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**in the NEWS****KEEP LEOPARDS OUT**

The Limelight disco in Atlanta, Ga., is going to replace its black leopard with mermaids.

A superior court judge has issued a permanent injunction telling the Limelight disco that it can no longer keep the leopard, or any other animal in a cage under its black plexiglass dance floor.

Club co-owner Dan Wisenthal reports the disco will fill the space with water and have ladies sporting themselves as mermaids in it.

**Miscellaneous**

The Hornmann Magic Co., of New York City was featured in a special report in the New York Daily News on Jan. 12th.

The Hoxie Bros. Circus is reportedly going to open its 1980 season about March 29th, in Florida.

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from  
DON MARCKS

The work schedule here has become somewhat confused, all because I have been very ill. Hopefully, I will be fully recovered and back on the job full time soon.

The past several issues were printed and processed by a friend who managed to keep most of the copies of Circus Report going out on time.

As you know the issue dated Jan. 28, 1980 was quite late getting into the mail. On top of that the Post Office managed to delay delivery of the issue for several days. Everyone should have that copy by this time.

Because of the problems caused by my illness it was decided the best thing to do was skip the issue that would have been dated Feb. 4, 1980 - thus allowing things to get caught up and make sure the Feb. 11th issue went into the mail as planned. That issue should also have reached you by the time you are reading this.

There has also been some confusion about ads sent in early this year. We will get to all of them as quickly as possible. Anyone who has sent an ad in which has not yet appeared in Circus Report, and who would like a refund, please let us know and your check will be returned.

I am sorry about the delay in mailing Circus Report and hope to have it back on a normal schedule by the end of the month.

I appreciate your interest and concern and your patience during this trying time.

## Correction

The Espanas and the Franconi Duo have not signed any contracts with Circus Knie as was previously reported in an issue of Circus Report.

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harness - A Real Money Maker
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# REPORT

## MEXICAN CIRCUSES . . . by Bobby Gibbs

Here are some of the shows I have seen in Mexico this season. It has been a circus fan's heaven with over 12 shows in Mexico City. They ranged from big arena shows to very small tent operations and I was lucky to visit 8 of them.

**CIRCO ATAYADE** - Presented in the Arena Mexico as a one ring circus. Had a 20 piece band some beautiful wardrobe, lighting, etc. The program included: Ada Smeya's tigers; John Herriott, horses and elephants; Chi Chi Atayade, Tanya the elephant; Fawcett's Swaying Stars; Wallenda's high wire; Iberras, flying act; Ruth Ann and Sebastian, poodles; Tangiers Troupe, arab tumbling; the Argentinos, perch; Ruthanna, sponge dive; 5 clowns; two production numbers, plus spec and finale.

**CIRCO LAS VEGAS (Union)** - presented in an American style big top, with 3 rings. Has a ten piece band and beautiful wardrobe. The program included: Spec, two elephant acts of 3

each; Cat Act with 4 tigers, 1 lion; Chimp act of 5 chimps; Appaloosa Liberty Act (6), purchased from Bob Hofmeister; Low Casting act; Production number with 8 webs; Magic Act plus the acts of the brothers Portugal Armando, hand balance, Chin Biaz Troupe, bounding rope; High Wire and a 4 people flying act.

**CIRCO BELLS** - Presented in a European style tent. Top looked new, had a Moon Walk in the front. Show has 9 piece band, plus taped music and featured: Spec with lots of girls and colorful wardrobe; 4 person flying act; Lots of clown gags; High Wire; Three elephants; Production for rocket act; Two girls in cradle act; Iron jaw act; Juggling (balls out of mouth).

**CIRCO VERTTI** - Small European style with organ and drums plus taped music. This is a family show and all members of the Vertti family are in the show. Trampoline, cradle, web, contortion, 5 midget clowns, dog act, 4 people flying act, musical clown, two elephants, motorcycle in globe - Uses 4 trucks, 4 buses, 2 pickups, 2 cars, 4 house trailers. Owner Ruban explains they use only a few animals because his family owns two shows and income is about the same for both units and the other unit carries many animals, and expenses are high, so he uses lots of ground and aerial acts.

**CIRCO BARLEY** - Brothers to Vertti - show is presented in European style tent and uses family acts. Lots of animals - 1 elephant, 2 llamas, 3 chimps, 8 dogs, 6 ponies, 1 horse, 5 lions, 2 bears, 2 monkeys. Show uses recorded music. Has good wardrobe and includes: contortion, clowns, flying act, low wire, chimps, hippo, llama, elephant, bears, sword balance, lion act (loose in ring and no arena or collars, all are grown males with nice manes, lion rides horse as finish (you have to see this act to believe it, they have only three prop boys at ring curb with whips). Show also has the hand balancing acts of the Vertti brothers.

**MAGICO CIRCO** - Has small top, uses an organ for music. Lots of clown gags, contortion, tumbler, teeterboard, juggling, 4 different magic acts. (Two families make up this show).

**CIRCO CEPILINI** - A TV clown owns this show which is presented under a big top with lots of production numbers, girls, 5 elephants, a live band and nice wardrobe.



*of Austria*

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## HOTLINE

On Jan. 25th, the Elkardis (the Rodriguez Sisters) while performing with the Hubert Castle Circus at Flint, Mich., fell while being suspended by their hair, when a swivel broke dropping them about 15 ft. to the floor. All three girls were checked thoroughly at the Hurley Medical Center and were found to have suffered only bruises and torn muscles. They were expected to return to the circus performance this month.

## In Memoriam

JIMMY DURANTE (86), popular comedian who made three generations of Americans laugh with his fractured English and Brooklyn wit. He died on Jan. 29th of pneumonitis. A memorial service was held for him at Beverly Hills' Church of the Good Shepherd and a private family burial was held afterwards.

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## Acts

Features at the Africa Safari Park (Naples, Fla.)  
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## Acts

The program presented for the 1980 Tripoli Shrine Circus featured the following acts:

Bob Top and Edna, roller skaters; Lawrence Grant, lions; Aerial display with Kathy, Kay, Olga, the Cavanaugh Sisters and Sir Marko; The Karinas Duo, trampoline; Rosa's Ponies, Pasquale's Mules, Gainer's Ponies; Clowns; The Cycling Dars, Timothy, rola bola, David, rola bola; The Geraldos, giant wheel; Dino Mediras (Goldfinger) balancing; Aerial ballet with the Spanish webs (4) and swinging ladders (4) and featuring Mark Pilger, cloud swing; The Albanis Family, aerial motorcycle; The Flying Cortez and the Flying Carrolls (all girls); The Hernandez Troupe, teeterboard; Clowns; Miss Marki's doves; Szmanshki's Chimps; Miss Loni's doves; Sir Chadwick Chase and his Rolls Rotten car; The Navarros, sword balancing, Randy and Sylvia, perch, Medros, sword balancing; Clowns; Capt. George's camels, The Gypsy Bears, Bob's trained malmutes; Bill and Carol Golden, elephants, Kathy and Bimbo, Murray Hill and Rosa with elephants; Hugo Zacchini, human cannonball.

Clown Alley included Phil Granger, Capt. Billy, Jim Jaynes, Tim-Tim, Soapo, Eddie and Eddie. The show band was directed by Mike Mike.

## MALIBU

... From William Wotsch

In 1939 our Cleveland Arena had the Arena Thrill Circus. It was advertised on some billboards in the city in big letters. Painted on a dark background with red letters were the words "Arena Thrill Circus".

The show opened during the Christmas holidays. We set up tables on the performing floor, as the Arena gave a banquet for the performers before opening night.

All acts were supposed to be thrill acts. Among the best was P. J. Riggins. He rode a bike down a high ramp from up in the rafters, then would dive off into a shallow tank of water.

In recently reading about the Diving Horses it brings back some memories. In 1949 the Hippodrome Varieties opened at the Cleveland Arena. It was part of a roller skating show, with circus acts and variety acts.

One of the acts was "Lottie Meyer and Her Disappearing Water Ballet." One of the girls in this act worked with the diving horses at Atlantic City and she said her mother also worked there. Can't remember her name.

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## HAL HAVILAND SEZ.....

**BUD CARLELL**, one of America's top performers with ropes, whips and boomerangs, passed away, almost unnoticed, last October, from heart disease at 81 years of age in Chicago. He is survived by his wife, Rose, who assisted him for 43 years in television shows, great stage shows like productions at New York City's Radio City Music Hall, rodeos at Madison Square Garden, tours with the Harlem Globetrotters, great circus shows where he often also acted as performance director, sport shows and shows of almost every variety in the entertainment world.

Bud's talent with the boomerangs was so unique it was, in all the world, a one-of-a-kind presentation.

So far, the technicians of the entertainment industry have missed a good thing by failing to shape up commercial video cassettes as an adjunct to the prosperous record and tape recording business. The sometimes unheralded but great expertise of many super novelty artists of our time, like Bud Carrell, should not be lost. They should be visually recorded in more ways than now exist commercially for public enjoyment in years to come. Video cassettes of cir-

## PEOPLE

**CHAPLAIN AUSTIN MILES** will be the ringmaster for the Youngstown, Ohio, Grotto Circus in March. He has also signed to appear with shows at Buffalo, Frankfurt, Lexington and Baltimore. At Charlotte, NC, he will be with **TINO WALLEN-DA ZOPPE's "Maranatha Circus"** at which time a PTL Club TV Special will be filmed.

cus acts, for sale at any store with a record counter is still an untried commercial venture on any serious scale. I am amazed that some get-rich-quick entrepreneur, looking for ways to make that first billion bucks, has not already called some of our stars in the circus world for video cassette tape sessions, to record their act for posterity!

Science is progress. I predict it will happen. Then, each artist, as an individual must negotiate very carefully in order not to sign away equitable performance royalties and residual payments for themselves. After all, how many cassettes could a visual circus act or novelty sight act record? That is, compared to the audible recording potential of a singer or musician with an unlimited library of material?

**BILLY BARTON (Continued)**

**FRANCIS BRUNN**, who resides now in a state-ly New Jersey home, is back in residence after a highly successful engagement in South Africa . . . **SANDY DOBRITCH** took along his lovely wife **MICHELE** for his Virgin Island production in Dec., after which they took off for a visit to Lake Tahoe. His second unit of the Chinese Acrobats is being culled from the main unit for the summer engagement at Busch Gardens (Williamsburg, Va.) This is being done to accommodate the half hour show format as opposed to a two hour spectacle by the original company.

**BOOK NOOK:** New in Paperback is the 1913 reprint of the classic **TRENT's LAST CASE** by E. C. Bentley, with a forward by **DOROTHY L. SAYERS** and a blurb by **AGATHA CHRISTIE** hailing the detection novel as one of the best ever written (Wilkie's "Moonstone" is number one). It is well written, ingenious, with a great and probably one of the **FIRST**, double-twist endings, (even before those of the late Christie, the most famous for such twists), and is made all the more remarkable by its having been written just after the turn of the century. The novel neither old-fashioned nor dated, drastically changed the course of detective fiction. I recommend it to mystery fans whole heartedly despite the fact that **MURDER INK** (in trade paperback) placed the book high on its **HALL OF INFAMY** list as one of the ten worst! Which I'd quarrel with except that intelligent people never quarrel with stupidity!

**IN-DEPTHS:** Vanity Thy Name is **TOMMY HANNEFORD!** Scheduled for an important meeting in Detroit in Mid-Jan., he was going through his wardrobe to select a suit to wear when he discovered sixty dollars in the pocket of one. Immediately he hid himself off to the beauty-parlor for a permanent and was, for a while at least, sporting curly hair which he assured me cleverly concealed his baby-bald spot! **STRUPPI** had the grace not to voice an opinion, nor did **TREVOR BALE**, whom I spoke to as

he was visiting at the time. Trevor says he feels great and was busy breaking a dressage horse for **MARK KAROLY** to work and a pony for **NELLIE HANNEFORD**. Apparently this is to be a new number in the program. . . Word is, by the most circuitous route imaginable, that **TARZAN ZERBINI** purchased at least two new Kenworths a set of poles, tons of equipment and lots of lighting and costuming for the all new Castle Circus, none of which has been confirmed, not itemized, and I admit to reporting it second and third hand! Come on, Johnny, give me a call and tell me what's going on! I'll eventually find out anyway. . . **LARRY CARDEN** opens his Carden-Johnson unit in Tulsa, Okla., followed by Springfield, Mo., and dates in Florida. . . Later in the year I am initiating a new policy for the column which my going to Europe has nothing to do with. The decision has been based on giving my readership more variety. From time-to-time Guest Columnists will appear (under my logo) and already **SANDY DOBRITCH** and **DEBBIE GOETSCHI** have agreed to write guest columns. Thus I am asking **JOHNNY HERRIOTT** and **JAN BIGGERSTAFF** to contact me also, giving each a chance to file lengthy reports, one from Circus World Museum, one from Circus Vargas. Columns should follow only one rule and that is a typewritten report, double spaced, filling no more than three sheets of standard typing paper and no less than two. These guest columns will then be interspersed with my regular column with its format established over the past five years. I should also be interested in hearing from others interested in doing a guest column.

There are, of course, two requirements. First, that the writer be professionally active in the industry; second, that the column be pertinent to today's show business scene. And, also, for legal reasons, either Don Marcks or myself, or both, must edit and screen the material before it is printed.

See you down the road, luvs.



**RINGLING'S CLOWNS (Continued)**

"We look for people who are physically fit, quick to react and who have, or can develop, excellent timing. We like clown applicants to be cheerful and to be able to improvise gags quickly, on the spur of the moment. These are the people we look for during auditions. We'll take those people to Clown College to teach them the basics of circus clowning, then we'll throw the best of them into the arena for their three-year apprenticeship.

"Anybody interested in going to Clown College should learn a few basics before they even apply," he said. "If you know how to juggle, ride a unicycle and can combine the two, know how to take good clown slaps and falls, can walk on three to six-foot stilts and have basic acrobatics down pat, you're ahead of 99 percent of all the other applicants we get."

Frosty also discussed some of the misconceptions many people have about circus clowns:

"It's a mistake to think that clowns don't talk. You'll see amateur clowns going around like a bunch of mutes, but we talk and yell all the time. People in the upper seats may not be able

to hear, but clowns do talk.

"It's also wrong to think that all clowns wear gloves. Most clowns wear gloves only if they're necessary to the act.

"Other people think clowns always smile with their mouths closed, that they never show teeth. That's wrong.

"Mime is good background for a clown, but it isn't used to the extent that many people think. Rarely can a circus clown carry off a gag using only mime technique. But it's good to know the basics and how to apply them to circus clowning.

"Watch a beginning amateur clown work and often you'll see what I call 'Keystone Cops' movement - fast and jerky. But a professional circus clown has to act natural, he has to move the way that's most natural for him. Gags sell the clown's funniness rather than the clown's strange movement," he said.

The American public likes quick sight gags, Frosty said. "Most of our ring gags are no more than 3½ minutes long. They're fast compared to some of the European clown acts which can run several minutes at a time. But the American public doesn't seem to appreciate that kind of humor - Americans get bored with long gags."

The Ringling Red Unit clown alley includes: Lou Jacobs, Glen "Frosty" Little, Dewayne Thorpe, John Russell, Ken Horsman, Dale Longmire, Mitch Freddes, Bill Dusell, Skeeter Reece, Garry White, Richard Nasch, Jim Tinsman, Jeff Gordon, Mike Keever, Mike Oster, Kerry Griffin, Leonard Wolen, Victor Ruiz, Chuck Sidlow, James Vogelgesang, plus girl clowns: Ruth Chadock, Kathy Herb, Tina Scotts, Danise Wilson and Peggy Williams, then there are midget clowns Serf Rocha and George Rollins.

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**in the NEWS****NO MORE PERFORMERS**

The Soviet Union will not send any more cultural performing groups or individual artists to the United States until the U. S. government negotiates a new cultural exchange agreement.

Negotiations on replacing the old exchange plan lapsed on Dec. 31st and then were recessed for the New Years holiday. However, because of the current political situation no new talks are planned.

President Carter said on Jan. 4th, that "most of the cultural and economic exchanges currently under consideration with Moscow" would be deferred to show U. S. anger over Soviet involvement in Afghanistan.

Culture Ministry spokesman Vladimir I. Litvinov said that "we cannot send any Soviet artists" to the United States until a new agreement is signed. He reiterated Soviet insistence that such an agreement include a provision guaranteeing the "security" of Soviet artists in the U. S.

American negotiators have resisted such a proviso so far, fearing it would be interpreted by the Soviet Union as a U. S. promise to return artists who seek to defect.

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**In Memoriam**

**JACK BAILEY (72)** who crowned more than 5,000 women in his 20 years as host of TV's "Queen For A Day" show, died Feb. 2nd at a Santa Monica, Calif., hospital from complications caused by pneumonia. He started as a barker at the 1933 Chicago Fair, worked with jazz bands, tent shows, then went to Hollywood where he became a radio announcer and TV host. In recent years he toured with stage shows, took character parts on TV shows and painted. Survivors include his wife, Jean.

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