

Trabing

Mostly about People

By Wally Trabing



Circus People Are Likeable

I like circus people. They talk easy and straight and usually reserve their bravado and swagger and fantasy for the blare of the show.

Even under the pressure of a daily move, they'll give a moment to talk of their lives outside the Big Top. Friday afternoon I wandered through the frantic tangle of ropes, canvas, powerlines and scattered color of the King Brothers' circus grounds, and found this to be true.

Bareback Rider Barbara Fairchild is built like a feather. She's pretty, but apparently not fragile, for she's had to jump about on moving horses for 12 years. She also travels alone with two children and you know this takes up the rest of her time.

Michael, the oldest at 4, watches the show, oh, about once

a month, but he won't come in the tent until the gorilla man has finished his act. Doesn't like it a bit.

"Keeping track of the kids is my main problem, keeping them on a proper diet," she says. "People are always giving them junk to eat.

They're on the road by trailer seven months out of the year and little Michael makes it a point to find wild flowers for his mother at each location. There are 11 children with the show, all under seven.

★ ★ ★

Charlie Roark is the sideshow manager and talker. Doesn't like the word "barker."

"All this 'step right up' business is dead along with the hootchy-kootchy and the horribly monstrosities called freaks. These shows are sponsored by civic clubs and while a Lion member wouldn't complain, his wife would worry at him all year.

"Today we reason with them. Like the preacher said, 'I tells 'em what I'm gonna tell 'em; then I tells 'em what I tells 'em; and then I tells 'em what I told 'em'.

"You see, we almost have to explain the sideshows to the young people, because many have never seen one before, or even a tent circus.

"Circus dying? I don't think so. As long as there're children, and I don't think we'll run out of them for awhile, there'll be circuses," he said.

"I tried out as ringmaster once, but my accent is not right. I'm from Arkansas. Can't help it. Worse yet, I've wintered in Florida for so many years that I've got my twang tangled up with my drawl."

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Eddie Hendricks is one of the oldest tight-wire walkers in the business. He's 50. His body is lithe, his hair gray and wavy, and his veins stand out on his arms like mole tunnels, and the tenseness of his act lines his face.

This is Eddie's farewell tour. He doesn't call himself the best, but he does possess the pride of the old timers. It's the pride that comes from sticking to a strict circus code—that no matter if he is performing before 10 people or 3000 he gives his full best. "There are not many who still do this," he said, and he really seemed sad. "The old spirit is gone. Not many give their best all the time.

"It's still a marvelous feeling though when everything falls into place like a jigsaw puzzle — when the rigging is perfect, the music with me, and my timing comes good. On those days I have the audience in the palm of my hand."

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Ricky Stiles is always with his elephants. He's a wiry man, moderate height, with steely curly hair and serious face that glowers when he's thinking.

About 35, he's always been an elephant man — 12 years with Ringling Bros. He tends and shows two four-ton females, one 18, the other 40 years.

They eat three 50 pound bales of hay and 25 pounds of grain each a day. I talked to him as he staked them inside the animal tent and one pulled a blackberry vine out by the roots and slowly chomped it up. Now, that would hurt me like the dickens.

Stiles said two things which were very interesting. The first one was that he can tell elephants apart by looking at their faces.

Elephant faces, he said, are as individual as yours and mine. When he was with Ringlings he helped tend 55 elephants, and he could tell one from the other at a glance just by looking at the face. Isn't that something?



Malio J. Stagnaro, President
By Estrella Stagnaro
Center of Municipal Wharf
Santa Cruz Beach

—oOo—

"HELLO, DOLLY!" Today, isn't it most wonderful to be haunted with this beautiful and catchy musical happy tune, "Hello, Dolly! It's so nice to have you back where you belong!" They may sing it to Carol Channing in New York, when she makes a grand entrance in "HELLO, DOLLY", on Broadway, but whether on land or sea, it is certainly so nice to be hearing and singing this tune in Santa Cruz too!

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WALT BOHRER OF SANTA CRUZ! CARTOONIST! HUMORIST! . . . Walt Bohrer has obtained the green light from MRS. TEX RANKIN, widow of the late WORLD CHAMPION ACROBATIC PILOT, to write exclusively a book on the spectacular flying career of her late famous husband, TEX RANKIN.

WALT AND HIS SISTER ANN BOHRER! Walt and his sister Ann, noted pilot and Ann an Aviatix, flew with Rankin for twenty-two years starting in 1926. Ann and Walt are now in the midst of extensive national research on details of Rankin's many records, mainly to insure accuracy.

TEX RANKIN'S STORY . . . This book will follow the humorous style used by Walt and Ann Bohrer's now famous book, in "TWENTY SMILING EAGLES" and will be profusely illustrated with photos and cartoons by Walt Bohrer. A noted New York Publishing House will handle the book.

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PAGING FOR MIKE MORISILI!!! . . . "Whale Are A-Blowin' In The Bay Off Santa Cruz.

MIKE MORISILI, News Director, of Channel "EIGHT", Salinas, California, KSBW, was being paged by Malio Stagnaro and Walt Bohrer, as they sat in the C. Stagnaro's "Sports Fishers' Coffee Shop", center, Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf, seeing "A WHALE OF A PICTURE" . . . "The Blowin' Whales" in the Bay off Santa Cruz!

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CARUEL ELWORTHY, Manager of Colonial Inn, also was enjoying the whales, "Thar She Blows!" Never a dull moment at C. Stagnaro's!

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"EYE-CATCHER! EDNA CARROLL AND HER NEW HAIR STYLE! Mr. and Mrs. John Carroll loves the "Life On The Wharf At Santa Cruz" as many Santa Cruzans do, as well as people from many different parts of the world. BEAUTIFUL HAIR STYLES Many beautiful hair styles