



**WINDJAMMERS UNLIMITED, INC.**  
Est. 1971

# CIRCUS FANFARE

VOL. 51 NO. 4      JUL/AUG 2021      ISSN 1056-1463



**Mills Bros. Circus bandleader Joe Rossi and his band in 1960. Joe Stefan second from left on trumpet.**  
*Photo by Sverre O. Braathen (WJU Hall of Fame 2009). Photo courtesy Special Collections, Milner Library, Ill. State Univ.*

WJU... Celebrating 50 Years

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2018	Connie Thomas* (WJU #1128) Past president; host of six summer meets
2020	Ron Keller* (WJU #492) Past-president; host of three meets; long-time conductor



# UNLIMITED, INC.

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When you can't tell  
which note is better



Call it a tie

## VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENT HELD MAY 27, 2021

with TIMOTHY NOEL TEGGE on Shrine Circus lot



Continuing the ongoing educational series initiated with the 2021 Virtual Convention, Timothy Tegge (WJU #2937) hosted a ZOOM broadcast from the site of the 79th Yaarab Shrine Circus, provided by Royal Hanneford Circus. Like all circuses, Hanneford had been inactive for 14 months as a result of the pandemic, so this launch was exciting. Timothy has been their Ringmaster in recent years. His session for WJU was prior to and including the Evening performance,

giving us a tour of the circus set in the Cumming (GA) Fairgrounds Pavilion, and including some key cameo images. Those included trumpeter Keith Greene (former Ringling bandmaster and WJU 2017 Hall of Fame laureate) and percussionist George Hook (Ringling Bros.)

Tim's insight into modern circus life was quite informative and it was fun being "back stage" and then "on stage" with him during the entire one-hour performance.

Wonderful to share this experience as circuses begin the return to live entertainment.



### BOARD MEETINGS

Your Board of Trustees Meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m. ET via ZOOM.  
Contact the Secretary if you wish to attend. [WJUSecretary@mywju.org](mailto:WJUSecretary@mywju.org)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Don Covington, WJU #119

Amazing things keep happening as we celebrate our Golden Anniversary Year. I never cease to be impressed by the many talents demonstrated by Windjammers.

Every one of us will benefit from a new WJU standing committee designed to provide assistance to our convention and meet hosts. The group includes members who have hosted past events as well as experts in the various aspects of our bi-annual gatherings. Windjammers VP Lynette Garlan, who hosted the highly successful Pittsburgh meet in 2019, is the chair. The committee will provide continuity and lessons learned to anyone hosting future events. In 2022, that will mean Barry DeChant, the Florida convention host and Marvin Manring, host of the summer meet in Springfield, Missouri.

We're always looking for volunteers to assist with coming events. If you are interested in helping with music, contact Becky Guth. Will you be in Florida prior to the convention? Barry DeChant could use your help. Marvin Manring has great plans for Windjammers in July 2022 in Springfield. If you would like to be part of his team, contact him.



**Barry DeChant, WJU #3283**  
**Our ringmaster and 2022**  
**Convention Host**

Be sure to register for the virtual summer meet coming up in July. I think you will be excited to see the variety of options that will be included. The virtual format will allow us to pay visits to the country's leading circus collections where curators will highlight circus music related items. Did you

ever hear of circus songsters? In the early 1900's, circuses sold booklets containing the lyrics to songs performed by clowns. The Milner Library at Illinois State University has a collection of them and will give us a peek during a virtual tour. The international Circus Hall of Fame in Peru, Indiana, has the bandstand used during the final year that Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus toured under canvas in 1956. Merle Evans' office was in a compartment that stored the show's Hammond organ. The Ringling Museum in Sarasota has the Five Graces bandwagon that was used by the Barnum & Bailey Circus during its five-year European tour when it was pulled by a 40-horse hitch. Itching to play circus music again? You can join fellow Windjammers in a virtual concert from the comfort of your own home. The WJU website contains all of the details. The website is updated regularly. You'll find new treats every time you visit.

Do you have experience in marketing? Have any ideas for promoting Windjammers on social media? How can we reach a wider audience and let more people know about us? Contact me so that we can take advantage of your ideas and experience.

Finally, Windjammers needs your help to attract new members. Now that community bands are meeting in person once again, mention our group to your colleagues, tell them how much it means to you and encourage them to check us out.

Be safe, be well.  
Don



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**Available with the 50<sup>th</sup> or standard logo**  
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### **MUSIC JOKE BOOK**

***Musical Laughs - Notes to brighten your day***  
**by Pat Wheeler, PhD, WJU #2636**

**Published June 2021 by Luminare Press.**  
**Available at your local bookstore or from on-line**  
**retailers at \$13.95**

**Charlie Bennett:** "This book covers all kinds of music, including circus music. Some think of circus music as a serious part of the act when we had live bands at the circus. This book shows the humorous side of it too. Keep an eye out for this book and have a fun time reading it."

# Virtual Event Plans - July 9-11, 2021

By Lynette Garlan, Committee Chair, WJU #3633

The 50th Anniversary Year Planning Committee has continued on with monthly meetings as the pandemic forced us to defer plans for an on-location Summer Meet. The Virtual Convention in January was hailed as a significant success, so we have decided to do a mini-version in July.

Separate emails and postings on the website have outlined the specifics and times. However, at a high level we've arranged a number of sessions over a three-day period we believe will be of interest to our members.

Registration will be required to participate and there is a flat \$20 fee per family unit. The Barnum Museum (Bridgeport, CT), the International Circus Hall of Fame (Peru, IN) and the Ringling Museum (Sarasota, FL) are hosting sessions. In addition, we will be accessing remotely some of the events hosted in Baraboo, WI by Timothy Tegge (WJU #2937) and his 2021 Circus Soirée.

Of particular excitement for some Windjammers anxious to play a circus music concert once again, we have agreed to provide a small Windjammers Unlimited Circus Band as part of Tegge's Soirée, giving a live public concert Saturday afternoon, July 10th, on the Ringling Mansion grounds in Baraboo, WI. It will also be "broadcast" to our members attending virtually. Charles Conrad (WJU #1525) is the bandmaster and is assembling a fine group of WJU volunteers. Contact Charlie at 317-844-4341 if you wish to explore this possibility and haven't volunteered already.

We are also hoping to have additional "culture" events from time to time, such as Peter Shrake's presentation on Circus World Museum archives on March 25 and Timothy Tegge's session from the Shrine Circus grounds in Cumming, GA on May 27. We also hope to schedule something for September and November this year, prior to meeting in person once again for the January 2022 Annual Convention in Bradenton, FL. Hopefully you are planning to join us in Florida for what is WJU's 50th Annual Convention, the first one having been in Key Biscayne, FL in January 1973.

Wishing you the best, and MAY ALL YOUR DAYS BE CIRCUS MUSIC DAYS!



## WORLD CIRCUS DAY

World Circus Day is celebrated the third Saturday of April each year. On April 19, 2008 the World Circus Federation and the European Circus Association celebrated European Circus Day for the first time. The holiday became international in 2010. The World Circus Federation (Federation Mondiale du Cirque), is headquartered in Monte Carlo, Monaco. Princess Stéphanie of Monaco serves as the honorary president of the Federation which is a nonprofit organization that aims to preserve, support and promote the art and culture of the circus.

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art participated in the 2021 celebration with a number of special events, including performances by the Circus Arts Conservatory (Sailor Circus.) Further, the Historic Asolo Theater hosted continuous screenings of *"Under the Big Top"*, a film produced by Windjammer **Buster Bailey** (WJU #17, dec.)



The Asolo Theater, originally located in Asolo, Italy, is housed in the Florida State University Center for the Performing Arts located on the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art property.

In 2019, Howard Tibbals donated a film collection to The Ringling Archives that consisted of 221 films shot by Buster Bailey, capturing performances and behind-the-scenes views of the circus. It includes footage of circus life and performances in towns across America.

Not only did Buster record the circus backyard sights and Big Top acts, he recorded tours of European circus parks, the Circus Hall of Fame when it was in Sarasota, and circus parades in Baraboo and Chicago.

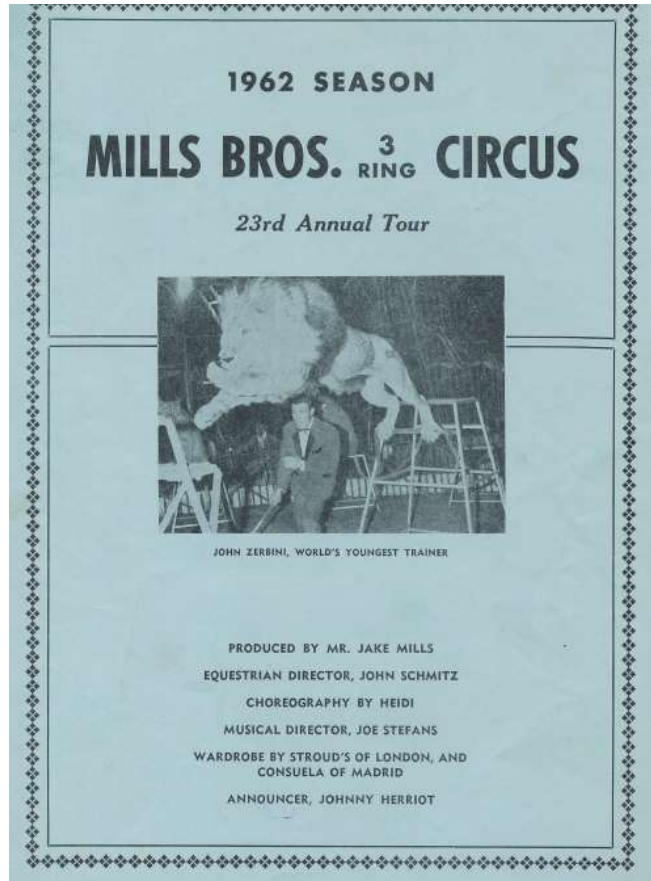
Buster's legacy lives on! (See **Tribute to Buster Bailey** article in the SEP-OCT 2016 *Circus Fanfare*, pages 14-16.)



# The Mills Bros. Circus 1962 Musical Program

By Eric Beheim, WJU #66

Among my all-time favorite circus audio recordings is one that was made during a Mills Bros. Circus performance back in 1962. GO TO MYWJU.ORG, sign in and go to PRESERVATION/CIRCUS MUSIC RECORDINGS to listen to the full recording



Cover of 1962 Mills Bros. Circus souvenir program, featuring a young Jon Zerbini in his pre-Tarzan days.

The Mills Bros. Circus was a mid-sized truck show owned and operated by the brothers Jake, Jack and Harry Mills. Based in Jefferson, Ohio, it toured primarily in the Midwest and Eastern United States, with many of its dates presented under the auspices of local civic and fraternal organizations, which would handle advanced ticket sales in exchange for a percentage of the take.

The Mills show promoted itself to potential sponsors as the "World's Largest and Greatest Fund-Raising Circus Under Canvas."

The Mills brothers understood how important having a good band was to the success of their circus. Even in the 1960s, when many truck show circus "bands" were reduced to only 2 or 3 players, the Mills show still carried a 10 to 12 piece band of first class musicians.

In 1962, the Mills Bros. bandleader was **Joe Stefan**, Windjammers Hall of Fame Inductee in 2007. Joe's musical credits included everything from having served as principal trumpet in the Cleveland Symphony to playing in Merle Evans' under-canvas Ringling-Barnum band. Other Mills Bros. bandleaders over the years included Frenchy LeBoeuf, C. W. Woolrich, Robert Mills, Joe Rossi, and Ramon Escorcia (WJU Hall of Fame 1979).

For more information on the Mills Bros. Circus Band, see Charles Bennett, Jr.'s article "Fifty Years by the Bandstand: The Traveling Circus Bands" that appeared in the February 2008 issue of *Circus Fanfare*.



Bandleader Joe Stefan and Mills Bros. Circus Band.  
Photo from Charles H. Bennett, Jr. collection.

According to the 1962 Mills Bros. printed program, the performance that year consisted of 26 displays. The music for only 17 of these displays survives on the recording being discussed here. Also, the acts do not follow the running order of the printed program. During the course of the '62 tour the running order of the acts would undoubtedly have changed. In some cases, there are no announcements to identify which act was performing. So, in these cases, the music itself had to provide clues as to what was going on.

Here are the titles that Don Covington (WJU #119) and I were able to identify:

## Display No. 1: Opening Spec: A Storybook Fantasy.

*The Greatest Show on Earth* (Young), *Sailor's Hornpipe* (traditional), *Ballet Egyptian* (Luigini), unidentified waltz, *The Woodchuck Song* (Davis), *Sailing, Sailing* (traditional), *Irish theme* (traditional), *Whistle While You Work* (Churchill), *Heigh Ho* (Churchill), *Hungarian Dance #5* (Brahms).

## Display No. 2: Jon Zerbini Lions.

*Scheherazade fanfare* (Rimsky-Korsakow), *William Tell Storm Music* (Rossini), *Royal Decree March* (English), *Royal Decree* (trio), unidentified waltz, *Himalaya March* (Onivas), *Herbert Clarke's Grand Entry* (2nd strain, played very, very slowly).

Announcer Johnny Herriot introduced Jon Zerbini as having come from Bordeaux, France. Over the years, the Mills Bros. Circus imported many circus acts and circus families into the United States and this might very well have been the case with Zerbini, still a few years away from presenting his lions while wearing a loincloth and billing himself as Tarzan. The descendents of many of the performers whom the Mills Bros. originally brought to this country are still appearing in U.S. circuses today.

**Display No.3: Aerial Acts: Miss Rita - The Aerial Stars.**

*Fanfare, Ca c'est Paris* (Padilla), *Alone* (Brown), *Autumn Leaves* (Kosma). *Alone*, by Nacio Herb Brown, was from the 1935 Marx Bros. film *A Night at the Opera*, and *Autumn Leaves* by Joseph Kosma, are just two of the musical gems that Joe Stefan programmed that year.

**Display No.4: Clowns.**

*Trombone Blues* (Jewell).

**Display No.5: The Great Franstine: Juggling on Globes.**

*Copa Cabana* (Walters), *Fine and Dandy* (Swift), *I Ain't Down Yet* (Willson). In 1962, few people probably recognized *I Ain't Down Yet* from Meredith Willson's 1960 musical "The Unsinkable Molly Brown". It became much better known two years later after the hit movie version with Debbie Reynolds was released.

**Display No.6: Animal Fantasy: Camels, Llamas, Ponies.**

*In a Persian Market* (Ketelbey), *In a Persian Market: Princess theme*, *Caravan* (Ellington), *Pony Boy* (O'Donnell), *Out of the East* (Rosey). This is the only time I've encountered Joe Rosey's 1918 Oriental foxtrot *Out of the East* in a circus musical program.

**Display No.7: The Pedrola Trio: Wire Act.**

Unidentified, *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* (Kern). At this point there was an announcement for the Wild West After-Show featuring Tom Ricardo and his famous movie horse, Buckie.

**Display No.8: Liberty Horses by John & Mary-Ruth Harriot.**

*Light Cavalry Overture* (Suppe), unidentified march, *Evening Journals Waltz* (Strauss), *Ta-Ra-Ra Boom-De-Ay* (Sayers), *They're Off! Galop* (Jewell).

**Display No.9: Clowns.**

*A Slippery Place* (Hacker). While music director for Ringling-Barnum's Red and Blue units, Bill Pruyn liked to work Phil M. Hacker's 1911 rag *A Slippery Place* into the production number scores.

**Display No.10: Les T-Fun: Chinese Plate-Spinners.**

*Chinatown, My Chinatown* (Schwartz), *Hands Across the Table* (Parish).

**Display No.11: Winter Wonderland Aerial Ballet.**

*Skaters' Waltz* (Waldteufel), *Winter Wonderland* (Bernard),

*I Love You* (Porter), *Frosty the Snowman* (Rollins-Nelson) (played fast for the spin), *Winter Wonderland* (reprise), and an unidentified march used as exit music for the web girls. Six years later, the Ringling-Barnum Circus' 1968 Edition featured a Winter Wonderland aerial ballet which might have been inspired by the Mills Bros. version.

**Display No.12: The Four Ruwills: High Pole Balancing.**

*Bésame Mucho* (Velázquez), *Serenade* from "The Student Prince" (Romberg).

**Display No.13: Disney-themed Clown walk around.**

*Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo* (Hoffman-David-Livingston), *Mickey Mouse Club March* (Dodd), *I'm Late* (Fain), *Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo* (reprise), *Ballad of Davy Crockett* (Bruns). Most, if not all, of these Disney tunes are still familiar today.

**Display No.14: The music suggests a Flying Act.**

*Man on the Flying Trapeze* (Lyle), *Wedding of the Winds* (Hall). A flying act does not appear in the Mills Bros. Circus' 1962 printed program and might have been added later in the tour.

**Display No.15: Miss Gerda Slide for Life.**

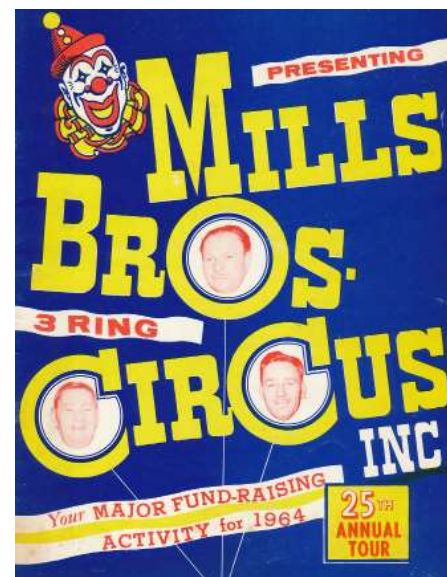
Unidentified march, drum roll.

**Display No.16: Carsfellie Trio: Head Balancing Act.**

*Misiridou* (Demetriades), *Begin the Beguine* (Porter).

**Display No.17: Elephants by Prince Kai Wai of Thailand.**

*Entry of the Gladiators* (Fučík), *Entry of the Gladiators* (trio), *Robinson's Grand Entry* (King), *Robinson's Grand Entry* (trio), *The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down* (Friend-Franklin), *Bravura* (Duble), *Bravura* (trio), *Quality Plus* (Jewell), *Quality Plus* (trio), *The Awakening of Spring* (Chas. Bach), *E Pluribus Unum* (Jewell), *E Pluribus Unum* (trio), *Abdullah* (King) (played for the head carry trick), *Colossus of Columbia*. "Prince Kai Wai" is Virgil "K.Y." Seagraves who presented the Mills Bros. elephant act for many years.



Cover of the 1964 booklet sent to potential sponsors, promoting the Mills Bros Circus show as the "World's Largest and Greatest Fund-Raising Circus Under Canvas."



# WINDJAMMERS HALL OF FAME

## Joseph Stefan (1902-1983), 2007 Inductee

By Rod Everhart, WJU #1351



**Mills Bros. Circus Bandmaster Joe Stefan in 1963.** Photo by Sverre Braathen, Courtesy Milner Library, Illinois State University.

**Joseph Stefan** was born in Edenborn, Fayette County, Pennsylvania on May 21, 1902. His parents were George and Mary (Sabol) Stefan, both of whom had been born in Czechoslovakia. Edenborn was located in the southwest corner of Pennsylvania, 50 miles south of Pittsburgh and 10 miles west of Uniontown, PA. During the 1800s until the mid-1900s, coal mining and the making of coke for the Pittsburgh steel mills was the largest industry in southwestern Pennsylvania. Joe's father worked in that industry and, unfortunately, died at age 37 when Joseph was just two years old.

Now a widow, Mary with Joseph and his three sisters (Anna, Mary, Elizabeth) moved to Uniontown, PA in 1905. Joseph attended Gallatin Elementary School there through 7th

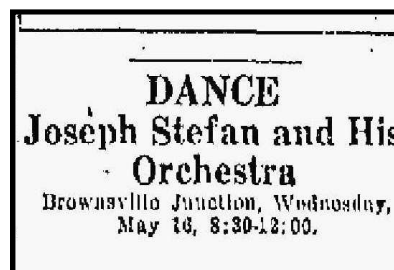
grade. The 1930 Federal Census reflected that was the extent of his public-school education. However, in 1917, as a 15-year-old, Joe headed off to New York City and enrolled at The Institute of Musical Art. That Institute had been founded in 1905 and in 1926 it merged with the Juilliard Graduate School to become the world-famous Juilliard School of Music.

Joe Stefan returned to Uniontown in 1919, now an excellent cornet/trumpet player, and played at the State and Penn Theaters in that town. He also met Bertha Dolores Peters of Masontown, another of the small towns in the Uniontown area. They were married in 1920 and settled in Nemacolin, PA, west of Edenborn and the Monongahela River. On May 29, 1921 their son, Melvin Joseph Stefan, was born. They soon moved to Uniontown and Gerald Cornelius Stefan was born there on May 15, 1923.



**Bertha Peters**

During this time, Joe continued with the theater gigs and formed his own orchestra, playing frequently in Uniontown and the surrounding villages. His group was initially known as **Joseph Stefan and His Orchestra**, and then later as **Joseph Stefan and His New Yorkers** or **Joseph Stefan and His Esquires**, depending on the venues.



be playing a gig at Brownsville Junction the next day. Brownsville, PA, is just 14 miles northeast of Uniontown along the National Pike (U.S. 40). It is just a guess, but Joe and his orchestra probably played that gig on schedule.

We do not know what actually happened, but a May 15, 1923 newspaper ad appearing the day Gerald was born indicated **Joseph Stefan and His Orchestra** would



In May 1926, Uniontown's *Morning Herald* newspaper reported: "A Uniontown city band, consisting of 30 veteran musicians has been organized. It combines the nucleus of three former bands of the city, and a serious attempt will be made during the coming months to give Uniontown the band music which this city deserves. Joseph Stefan has been named musical director."

It did not take long for Joe to become a success. Just two weeks after the new band's formation, the newspaper's headline was "**New Local Band Makes Big Hit in Parade**", with the article reading "Making its initial bow at the head of the Memorial Day parade Monday afternoon, the new Uniontown City Band won the plaudits of hundreds of onlookers by their snappy music and martial step. The band is under the leadership of Joseph Stefan, trumpeter."

Always on the lookout for playing opportunities, in 1928 Stefan was the lead trumpet player in the orchestra at the Metropolitan Theater in Morgantown, West Virginia.

### Then in 1929, the circus called.

Joe joined the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus band under the leadership of Merle Evans and spent seven seasons with the show. The family maintained their home in Uniontown and Joe would be back home during the off season and for special occasions. On March 2, 1934, Uniontown's *Daily News Standard* reported on the Fourth Annual Minstrel Show, stating: "The old boys at the country store in Rubesville came through fine with their typical old band music, which brought memories of circus days. Particularly fine were the cornet solos. 'Rubesville' was put on by a group including Joseph Stefan."

Home for the winter each year, Stefan remained musically active in Uniontown. A December 24, 1930 newspaper ad proclaimed the Christmas Round Dance would be held December 25th from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., featuring **Joseph Stefan and His New Yorkers. Gents \$1 Ladies 50¢**

Temporarily leaving the sawdust world at a time when his boys were about to wrap up high school, Stefan was back in Uniontown in the late 1930s and early 1940s managing the Uniontown Municipal Band, the Uniontown Fireman's Band, the VFW Drum & Bugle Corps, judging the musical units in the Halloween Parade, leading his orchestras, and playing lead cornet with other dance bands. As an example, in August 1939 Stefan and his Uniontown Municipal Band of 24 musicians played the kickoff concert in a Wednesday evening series on the lawn of the County Home with over 500 in attendance. The newspaper reported "**Band Concert a Big Treat**" and added "Also keenly enjoyed was the little German band" comprised of Joseph Stefan on lead cornet, his son Gerald on first trumpet, and others. A week or so later, the Fireman's Band, under the direction of Stefan, gave a special concert each evening. That next month, his oldest son, Melvin, was off to Penn State University, having tied for

first place in the high school's scholarship exams. Both boys were talented musicians, too. A June 1937 news feature had a photo of 14-year-old Gerald with his cornet and 16-year-old Melvin with his trombone, and the text reading: "Boys don't have to wait until they grow up to begin doing things. Sons of Joseph Stefan, Uniontown orchestra leader and music teacher, already showing promise of real musical talent."

At the 17th Annual Musicians Mardi Gras in 1941, nine orchestras were included, the most prominent being the 35-piece dance band directed by George Silver and "featuring Joseph Stefan, popular trumpeter." He was also featured that year with Ernie Fiorito and his 8-piece band playing "modern jazzy-style concerts."

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after February 17, 1897 and on or before December 31, 1921)

SERIAL NUMBER 1334 1. NAME (Print) T. 10064

2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 303 N. Gallatin Ave. Uniontown, Fayette, Pa.

3. MAILING ADDRESS Same

4. TELEPHONE Uniontown 3324 5. AGE IN YEARS 39 6. PLACE OF BIRTH Youngstown, Pa.

7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Bertha Dolores Stefan, 303 N. Gallatin Ave. Uniontown, Pa.

8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS H.C. Frick Coal & Coke Co., Uniontown, Pa.

9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS West Leisening #2, Leisening, Fayette, Pa.

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.

D. S. S. FORM 1 (Revised 3-1-42) (over) ☆ 890 10-21330-1 Joseph Stefan (Registered's signature)

In 1942, Joseph Stefan's "serial number" with the Local Draft Registration Board No. 6 was 1334. But at age 40, he was not drafted. However, both of his sons did enlist in the war effort. Melvin, with one year of college, enlisted on April 3, 1941 and reflected his occupation as "Musician and Teacher of Music." Gerald, with two years of college, enlisted on February 15, 1943, showing his occupation as "Office Machine Operator." In fact, at the time Gerald was in Washington, D.C., employed by the F.B.I., Department of Justice.

Meanwhile, Joe helped the war effort by working for the H. C. Frick Coal & Coke Company in nearby Leisening, PA, producing materials for the Pittsburgh steel mills. When Gerald, or Jerry as he was now known, joined the Army in 1943, he was made a member of the Air Transport Command (ATC) band that took Glenn Miller's place after his death on December 15, 1944. When the war was over, Jerry returned home with a musical career, playing in notable theater orchestras in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Likewise, Melvin's return to civilian life landed him in Cleveland, OH.

Following the war, at some point Joe was back in the Ringling-Barnum circus band. He was still with Ringling for the final under-canvas performance at Heidelberg Raceway near Pittsburgh, PA on July 16, 1956. Stefan left Ringling at that point, later commenting: "**Canvas ... that's the real circus.**"



**Joe Stefan, Bandmaster of the 1961 Mills Bros. Band. Windjammer Lloyd Fengel (WJU #42) is on trumpet, just to the left of Joe. The young announcer standing behind the microphone is Johnny Herriott.**

After Merle Evans had retired from Ringling at the end of the 1969 Season, he was asked, "*Merle, who were the best solo cornet players you ever had on the band?*" His immediate answer was "*Joe Stefan and Bill Kirkhise. They never missed a cue.*" Indeed, Merle and many others held Joe Stefan in highest regard as an outstanding circus musician.

Stefan played the solo cornet book on the Cristiani Bros. show in 1959 and the Mills Bros. Circus in 1960. For the seasons 1961 through 1965, Stefan was the bandmaster for the Mills Bros. Circus, having replaced Joe Rossi. The September 22, 1961 *Daily Courier* newspaper in Connellsville, PA had the headline, "**With Circus Band.**" The text reads: "*Joseph Stefan, formerly of Uniontown and Point Marion is the Mills Bros. Circus bandmaster and will perform at Uniontown Speedway on October 12.*" While Joe was the Mills Bros. bandmaster, his wife, Bertha, was with him as the show's wardrobe mistress.

Charles Bennett, Jr. (WJU #1) and Bill Roosa (WJU # 679) both have commented in previous *Circus Fanfare* articles about their playing under Joe Stefan.

Bennett's father had suggested to Joe following a circus performance that his "kid loves circus music and plays cornet." Joe turned to young Charlie and said "Tomorrow, bring out your cornet". And so it happened that the next day

Joe sat Charlie Bennett, Jr. down between Bobby Danks and Ozzie Kristen on the solo book. Charlie noted that Joe could pick up the horn "cold" during the show ... and with Danks and Kristen on the part that didn't have to happen too often ... and "blow the quarter poles off their foundation." Charlie was amazed, for example, when Joe would start the intro to "Copa Cabana" an octave higher, going from an opening high C "on up from there."

Bill Roosa met Joe when he sat in with the Mills Bros. Circus band when it was in Hazelton, PA in 1960. A few pieces were played and then came "*The Storming of El Caney Galop*" at a tempo well beyond anything Bill had ever encountered. Bill was totally lost and when he had his trumpet up to his lips, taking a deep breath ready to play, Joe grabbed his arm and said, "We're done," and burst out laughing. Later, when the band had a break during the Clown Act, Joe pulled up the part again and asked Bill where he had planned to come in. Bill pointed to the middle of the page and that cracked Joe up once again. They became friends and Bill had other opportunities in the early 1960s to play next to Joe. In all of those shows, the band played Brahms' "*Hungarian Dance No. 5*". In it was a quite difficult trumpet solo. All the trumpets would always focus on Joe playing that passage. Bill reported Joe never missed a note and it was perfect every time.



Joe Stefan retired permanently from the sawdust world at the end of the 1965 season. As it turned out, the 1966 season was the last one for the Mills Bros. Circus. It closed operations and its assets were sold to Sid Kellner who started the James Bros. Circus.

No doubt, Stefan was looking forward to a more relaxing time, and perhaps being with his five grandchildren: Jill, John, Mark, Gerald B, and Melanie. At this point both his sons and their families had moved to California, with Melvin in San Mateo and Gerald in Walnut Creek. Joe and Bertha settled in nearby Benicia, Solano County, California. All three locations are in the San Francisco area.

Joseph Stefan died November 7, 1983 at age 81. His widow then moved to be with Melvin and family, and she died October 13, 1986 at age 85.

Want to hear what Joe's trumpet playing sounded like? An excellent recording of the entire 1962 Mills Bros. Circus show is accessible to members via [MYWJU.ORG](http://MYWJU.ORG). There is a separate audio file for each of the 17 Acts referenced in Eric Beheim's article in this *Circus Fanfare*. Listen to the 1962 Mills Bros. Circus Band with Joe Stefan at the helm and you will be impressed!

**MAY ALL YOUR DAYS BE CIRCUS MUSIC DAYS !!**



**Mills Bros. Bandmaster Joe Stefan in 1964**  
*Photo credit: Sverre O. Braathen Circus Slide Collection;  
Special Collections at Milner Library, Illinois State University*

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## MILL BROS. CIRCUS

By Rod Everhart, WJU #1351

Unlike some circuses that just incorporated "Brothers" into their title to give credibility, the Mills Bros. Circus was actually owned by three brothers ... Jake, Jack, and Harry Mills. They all had experience in the circus industry.

The brothers acquired the Richard Bros. Circus and opened it as the Mills Bros. Circus on April 20, 1940 in Tallulah, LA. The show ran continuously until 1966. Jake Mills served as the first bandmaster, followed by L. Claude Myers (1941), C.H. Woolrich (1942-43), Chuck Foster (1943), Fred Mascoe (1944), R.V. Woodward (1944), Ellis "Skinny" Goe (1945), Jake again in 1946, George R. Bell (1947), Robert Mills (1948-51), Joe Rossi (1952-55), Ovilla "Frenchy" Leboeuf (1956-58), Joe Rossi (1959-60), Joe Stefan (1961-65), and Ramon Escorcia (1966.)

The Mills Bros. Circus was a mid-sized truck show that toured the U.S., primarily in the Eastern and Midwestern states. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many of the smaller shows had a bad reputation ... "grift shows" in circus lingo ... and that often caused patrons to be skeptical of all circuses. The Mills Bros. Circus prided itself on running a clean show and it gained an excellent reputation with the public and its crew.

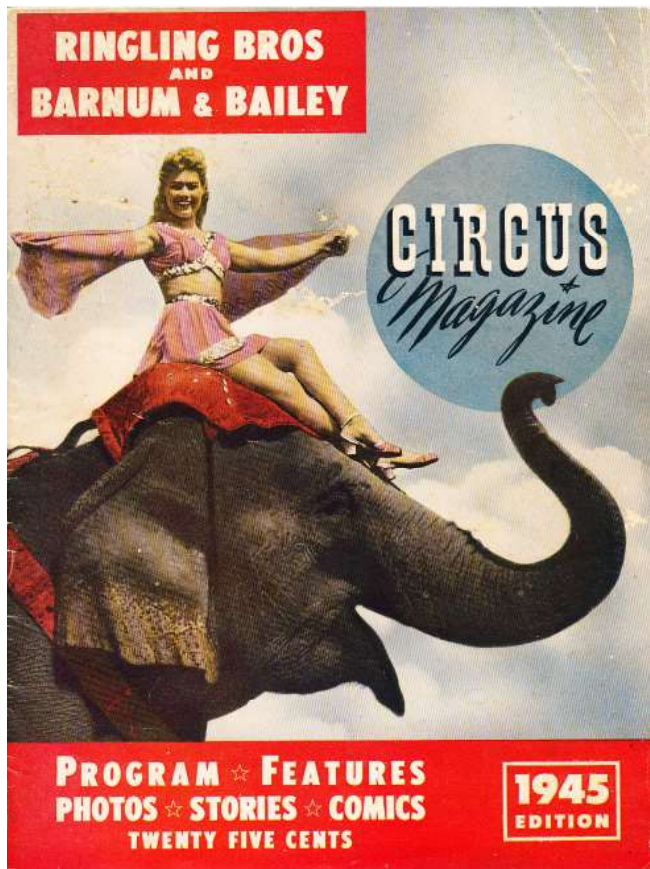
The Mills brothers appealed to local sponsors to sell tickets and promote the show well in advance of its arrival. Typically these were civic and fraternal organizations. The sponsoring groups then received a percentage of the ticket sales. Much like Shrine Circuses, these sponsors often became dependent on the circus as their annual fund-raiser. Certainly, a benefit of this approach to the Mills Bros. Circus was that using local, well-known and trusted sponsors boosted their credibility and favorable reputation.

In 1953 after Paul Mason Lewis died, the Mills brothers purchased the assets of the Lewis Bros. Circus from Paul's widow, Mae. Paul and Mae had purchased a small one-ring circus in 1929. They based their circus in Jackson, MI and it grew rapidly until closing in 1942 as a result of WWII impacts. It reopened briefly in 1945, but was not successful.

Mills Bros. Circus brought many acts to this country that went on to perform successfully with the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. In 1962, a teenaged Jon "before-Tarzan" Zerbini was the lion trainer, with his father on alert outside the cage. That year, John Herriott (1931-2015) had a 12-horse liberty act plus the camels and llamas. He was also the announcer as seen in the photo on Page 10.

# 1945 FITCH BANDWAGON BROADCAST

By Eric Beheim, WJU #66



In previous issues, we discussed the appearances made by Merle Evans and the Ringling-Barnum band in 1943 and 1944 on the popular Sunday evening radio show **The Fitch Bandwagon**. These broadcasts originated live from Madison Square Garden and took place just prior to the start of the evening performance. In addition to Evans, Ringling's Director of Radio Publicity F. Beverly Kelley would be on hand to enthusiastically describe the latest acts and attractions and to introduce circus personalities such as Fred Bradna or Robert Ringling to the radio audience.

For many years, no recordings of the Ringling band's 1945 broadcast were known to exist. Then several years ago, Don Covington (WJU #119) came into possession of a carton of 16-inch "instantaneous" transcriptions disks such as were used by radio stations to transcribe radio shows while they were being broadcast. Among these disks was one with a partial recording of the Ringling band's **1945 Fitch Bandwagon** appearance. The recording was made by Ted Deppish (see adjacent article) for his own personal use, but using professional quality equipment. This would explain why portions of the program, including the Fitch commercials, are missing. **Even in this abbreviated form, however, it is of great historical value since it could very well be the only surviving recording of this particular broadcast.** The Ringling band's **1945 Fitch Bandwagon**

appearance can now be heard by WJU members on our [MYWJU.ORG](http://MYWJU.ORG) website's **Preservation/Circus Music** tab.

The Ringling band's 1945 broadcast was originally scheduled for Sunday April 8th but had to be postponed due to the sudden and unexpected death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt earlier in the day.

The surviving audio begins with the program already "in progress" and host Jack Costello thanking Dick Powell in Hollywood, suggesting the broadcast had opened with a Powell appearance prior to Merle Evans being introduced. Since the Ringling broadcast had been rescheduled, it is possible it was combined with a previously scheduled appearance by Powell.

After some scripted banter between Evans and Costello, Evans leads the band in an up-tempo performance of Al Sweet's *Ringling Bros. Grand Entry*.

Afterwards, Bev Kelley joins the proceedings, describing the circus street parade the Ringling show had recently staged in New York City to benefit the Seventh War Loan. (Ringling had last paraded there in 1921.) As Evans and the band play *Symphonia March* and *Olevine March*, Kelley describes some of the parade units.

Next, Kelley introduces clown Felix Adler and arranges for him to be interviewed by a little boy chosen from the audience. The banter between Adler and the little boy sounds scripted, suggesting the child was, in fact, a professional actor. This leads into the band playing Fred Jewell's *Radio Waves March*.

Next, Evans and the band perform one of the most popular features of their annual appearances on **The Fitch Bandwagon**, doing split-second music changes on whistle cues. To prove that these changes are unrehearsed, another boy is chosen from the audience to blow the whistle.

The first number the band plays is a brief portion of the special score written by Deems Taylor for that year's **Alice in Circus Wonderland SPEC**. Each time the music changes, Kelley describes the acts that it would typically accompany. For a while, the music changes and Kelley's commentary go smoothly. But then the boy starts blowing the whistle with the briefest of pauses in between and even before Kelley can finish his comments. To their credit, Evans and the band make the changes anyhow but eventually cut the sequence short with a chord. At this point, the program cuts away to a report of the latest war news, which is where the audio ends. (Only a few weeks after this broadcast aired, Germany signed unconditional surrender papers, ending World War II in Europe.)



# TRIBUTE TO TED DEPPISH - Circus Music Enthusiast

By Don Covington, WJU #119

I came to know Ted Deppish through the Circus Fans Association of America (CFA). He was a very active Circus Fan from the Canton, Ohio area. We met at a CFA convention and, in conversation, he mentioned that he had worked as a recording engineer and had obtained permission from Merle Evans to record live performances of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus band. Naturally, I was intrigued and we continued to correspond off and on for years. He shared with me some of the letters that he had received from Merle. They corresponded every season when the show played Ohio.

Theodore Paul Deppish was born September 30, 1902 in Canton, OH, and he lived his entire life there. His career path was fairly straight-forward: Student, Tool Maker, Clerk, Driver for a bakery, and then Delivery & Salesman for Alfred Nickles Bakery. During World War II he served in the Army, having joined February 16, 1942. But it was his hobby as a "recording engineer" and circus memorabilia collector that is his legacy.

After Ted passed away at age 60 on June 11, 1963, portions of his extensive circus collections were obtained by another Ohio circus fan, a lawyer named Bob Ball, who was a member of CFA's Clyde Beatty Tent, located in Canton, OH where Deppish lived.

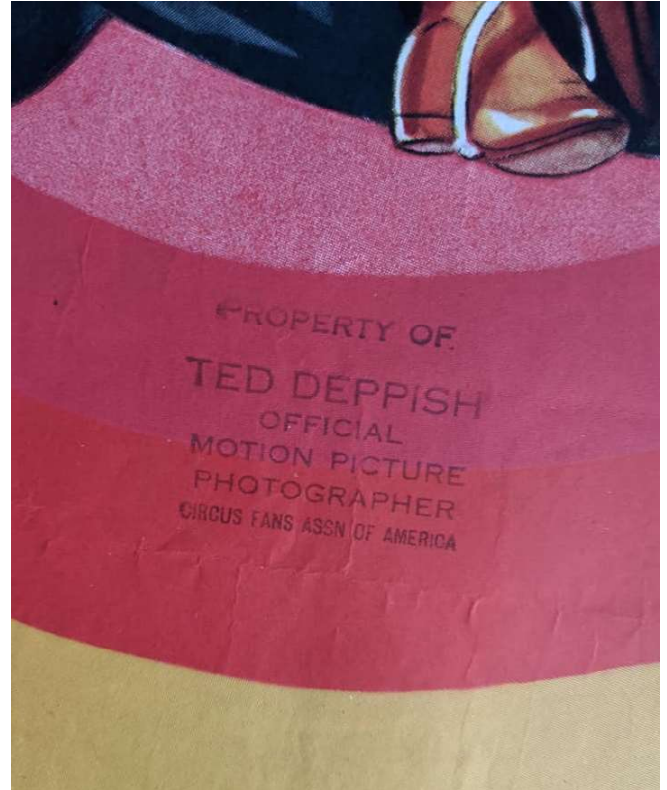
I was a "pen pal" with Bob Ball for many years. After Bob died, his family contacted me and said that Bob had instructed that his circus collection be sent to me. When I received it in 2009, it included boxes of Ted Deppish's wire recordings and reel-to-reel tapes.

Unfortunately, some of them were in very poor condition. Others, however, were salvageable. John Wetzel (WJU #949) and Eric Beheim (WJU #66) spent a lot of time transferring the audio to digital files. The wire recordings and tapes were especially a challenge, because over time they had stretched or disconnected causing distortion.

At the time of receiving the recordings, I asked noted circus historian Fred Pfening if he knew anything about Ted Deppish. Fred told me that Ted "mutilated" his circus posters with his name stamp, "PROPERTY OF TED DEPPISH". He did the same to photos and other circus memorabilia he acquired. At some point in the 1960s or 1970s, Fred's dad purchased a number of posters and other materials from Ted, all with the ownership stamp.

Fred further notes that Ted's name stamp continues his legacy to this day. As recently as the Circus Historical Society's auction conducted by Freedom Auction Company in Sarasota in 2019, there were rare lithographs and photos with Ted's identification stamp. Unfortunately, that stamp

on the face of these items greatly reduced their value to collectors. And poster collectors such as Timothy Tegge (WJU #2937) and Chris Berry (WJU #3959) have harsh comments relative to Ted's penchant for defacing what would otherwise be valuable circus memorabilia. **DON'T DO THIS!**



Fortunately, Ted did not find a way to embed his ownership stamp into the wonderful audio files he recorded and we are now preserving and protecting.

I think that the 1944 and 1945 Fitch recordings were made by Ted in a radio studio directly from a live broadcast. They may well be the only existing recordings of these historic performances by the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey band.

After Eric and John salvaged as much as they could, I packaged up the original materials and sent them to Circus World Museum's Parkinson Library in Baraboo. Peter Shrake, the archivist at Circus World, tells me that the recordings are scheduled to be reviewed and converted to digital format, but they are low on the priority list and it could be years before that happens.

It is now 58 years since Ted Deppish's death, but we give him a salute for the historic recordings he wanted preserved. Now, WJU has its own copies, thanks to John and Eric, and they are accessible by members on our MYWJU.ORG website. I urge our members to go listen to these and other wonderful examples of circus music at its best.

# RINGLING's DECCA RECORDS in 1953

By Eric Beheim, WJU #66

[Editor's Note: This is the fourth in a series of articles by Eric Beheim discussing the commercial phonograph records that were made by Merle Evans and the under-canvas Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus band. The six sides they recorded for RCA Victor in 1930 were discussed in the NOV-DEC 2020 issue of *Circus Fanfare*, the eight sides they recorded for Columbia Records in 1941 were covered in the JAN-FEB 2021 issue, and the 16 sides they recorded for Capitol Records in 1949 were included in the MAY-JUN 2021 issue. The MAR-APR 2021 *Fanfare* featured a 1947 Ringling recording on Commodore Records that described a visit to the RBBB circus and accompanied by an air calliope.]



In 1953, Merle Evans and the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus band returned to the recording studio one final time to record fourteen sides for Decca Records. Eight of these sides were released as the Decca 78-rpm record album **Circus Time**. As was the standard industry practice back then, a 10-inch long-playing version of **Circus Time** with these same eight sides was also released. Although I've never seen one, there was undoubtedly a 45-rpm **Circus Time** album as well.

The track list for **Circus Time** was as follows:

<i>Barnum and Bailey's Favorite</i>	(Grand Entry)
<i>Wedding of the Winds/Trombone Blues</i>	(Aerialists)
<i>Gentry's Triumphal</i>	(Elephants)
<i>Kentucky Sunrise/Prince of Decorah Galop</i>	(Clowns)
<i>Le Pere de la Victoire (Father of Victory)</i>	(Liberty Horses)
<i>The Purple Carnival</i>	(Wild Animal Act)
<i>Bravura</i>	(Jugglers)
<i>Tropic to Tropic</i>	(High Wire)

More than likely Decca was planning to release a second album that would have contained the remaining six sides that had been recorded. However, in the early 1950s, the Ringling band's earlier albums recorded for Columbia and Capitol were still being sold. All of this competition might

help to explain why Decca never released a second album that could have included the following tunes:

*The Southern*  
*Royal Bridesmaids*  
*Quality Plus*  
*Caravan Club*  
*Entry of the Gladiators*  
*Battle Royal*

By the mid 1950's, there was little demand for 78-rpm records and 10-inch long-playing records were no longer being manufactured. Decca eventually reissued **Circus Time** as a 12-inch long-playing record with all of the fourteen sides the band had recorded.

The 12-inch **Circus Time** LP's track list was as follows:

**Side 1:**  
*Barnum and Bailey's Favorite*  
*Wedding of the Winds/Trombone Blues*  
*Gentry's Triumphal*  
*The Southern*  
*Royal Bridesmaids March*  
*Purple Carnival*  
*Quality Plus*





Revised CIRCUS TIME album cover - 12" LP

#### Side 2:

*Bravura*

*Caravan Club*

*Le Pere de la Victoire (Father of Victory)*

*Kentucky Sunrise/Prince of Decorah*

*Tropic to Tropic*

*Entry of the Gladiators*

*Battle Royal*

For this reissue, the audio was reprocessed. Also, the album's cover was completely redone. The new artwork, which featured vintage Ringling circus posters, was the most memorable and "circusy" of all of the Ringling band's record album covers. It truly captured the color and excitement that was "The Greatest Show on Earth."

It was this 12-inch reissue that I bought in 1963 while I was still in high school. It had to be special ordered through my local record store since they didn't have it in stock. After several impatient weeks of waiting, the store finally called and said it had come in. I can still remember how excited I was when I first saw the album's circus poster cover. I can also remember how disappointed I was when I first played it. Whoever had reprocessed the audio had showed little respect for the original recordings; the music came out harsh and distorted, as if the musicians were angry at having to play it and had deliberately made it sound as bad as possible. It was by far the worst-sounding record in my collection and I seldom listened to it.

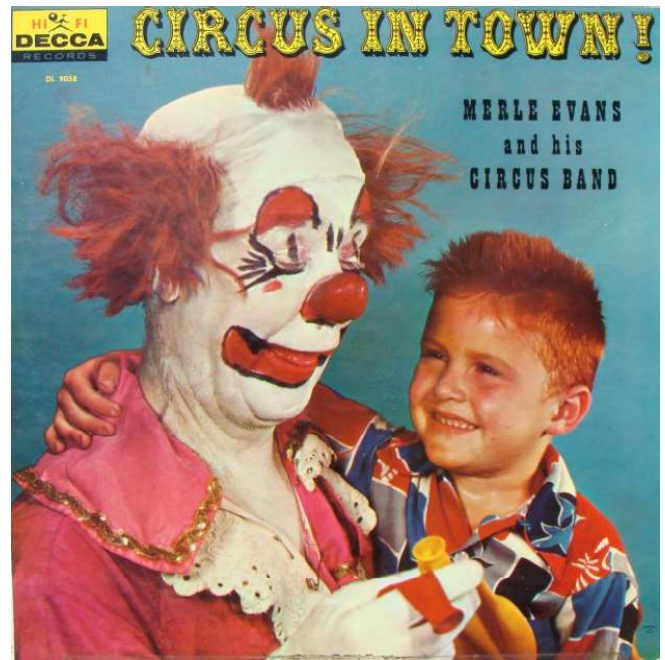
Many years later, I was able to obtain a complete set of the original **Circus Time** 78-rpm records in near mint condition. Just recently, I transferred them onto my computer's hard drive. While monitoring the transfers, I was surprised at how much better these original recordings sounded compared to the versions on the "reprocessed" 12-inch LP. Since these

records were in such good shape, about all I had to do in the way of audio restoration was to remove the surface noise and edit out a few clicks and tics. My only regret was that I didn't have original copies of the other six sides.

The fourteen sides recorded for Decca in 1953 were the last commercial recordings the Ringling band would make. Merle Evans left the show at the end of the 1955 season. The following year, the Ringling Circus was forced to close part way through its tour due to staggering debts and a host of other problems. When it returned again in 1957, it was appearing exclusively in arenas, auditoriums, and stadiums and did not carry its own self-contained band.

\* \* \* \* \*

Merle Evans went on to record several other commercial albums of circus music using bands made up of top studio musicians. These albums included **Circus in Town** (Decca DL 9058), which was ruined by some totally unnecessary announcements and sound effects. Further, some claim it as having the creepiest cover of all time! An "Enhanced for Stereo" version was also produced (Decca DL 79058.)



DECCA 33rpm 12" LP - mono: CIRCUS IN TOWN !

Following are the liner notes for **CIRCUS IN TOWN !** which were provided by Sverre O. Braathen (WJU #9, WJU Hall of Fame 2009):

*"Toscanini of the Big Top..."*

*In musical circles the world over and in thoughts of millions of American circus goers, the name of Merle Evans means circus music ...the galops, the rousing marches and lilting melodies of the big top. He is its living symbol, its dominating, beloved exponent. Musicians consider Merle Evans a remarkable guy. He was born in Columbus, Kansas,*



and ran away from home to lead a carnival band when he was only sixteen. He graduated to the baton of the Greatest Show on Earth (1919) and for 37 years led that band without missing a performance. The world of red wagons and white canvas knows him as the greatest exponent of real circus music in the whole spangle-studded history of this form of entertainment.

"Tremendous... Stupendous!"

Suddenly, the sideshow band blares forth and the hundreds of men and boys, mothers and daughters surge toward the ballyhoo stand, as the rapid raucous voice shouts, "Did you ever see a rooster play a fiddle? Inside you will positively see the world's only living skeleton, the human pin-cushion, the man from Mars, and Jo Jo the Dog Faced Boy!"

On into The Big Top. Every seat is filled and still the crowd pours in. Suddenly there is a loud fanfare; great red curtains are drawn aside; beplumed Merle Evans, resplendent in a uniform of red-and-gold, leads his famous band into the crowded tent at the head of the beautifully costumed "spec". To the stirring notes of "Caesar's Triumphal March" the circus performance begins!

For this is the day the CIRCUS IS IN TOWN!

- Sverre O. Braathen

**CIRCUS IN TOWN !** included the following tunes:

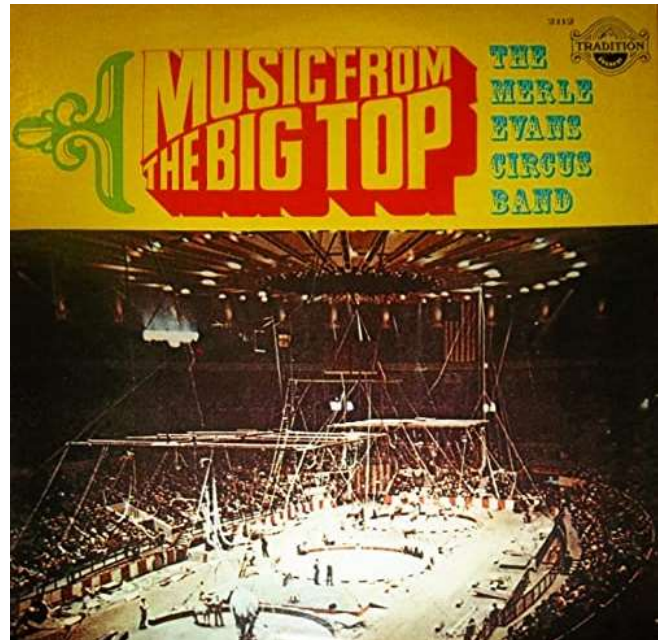
**Side One:** Oh You Circus Day, Entry of the Gladiators, Caesar's Triumphal March, Royal Decree, Jungle Queen, Memphis the Majestic, Fan Tan, Colossus of Columbia.

**Side Two:** Miss Trombone, Teddy Bears' Picnic, Rolling Thunder March, Crimson Petal Waltz, Circus Echoes, Old Glory Triumphant.

\* \* \* \* \*



**Music from the Big Top** (LPBR 5061) was produced on the Everest label, featuring Merle Evans "and his all star band." Another edition of this album was on the Tradition label.



**MUSIC FROM THE BIG TOP** included the following 12 tunes: Robbins Brothers Triumphal March, The Walking Frog, Embossing the Emblem, The Booster, International Vaudeville, Dusty Trombone, Gallito, Thunder & Lightning, Siamese Parade, Valse Bleue, The Southerner, Walsenburg Galop.

\* \* \* \* \*



Then, in 1967, there was the ill-advised **Circus Spectacular** (Decca LK 4870). In this album the music ended up taking a back seat to even more sound effects and Harold Ronk's overly flamboyant announcements.



**CIRCUS SPECTACULAR** was first released in the UK and then in the United States under the London Records label (SP 44095). It was later reissued as a CD. The album included these tunes:

**Side One:** *Fanfare, Caesar's Triumphal March, March Indienne, Jungle Queen, Russian Circus March, Trombone Blues, Wedding of the Winds, Symphonia March, Fanfare*

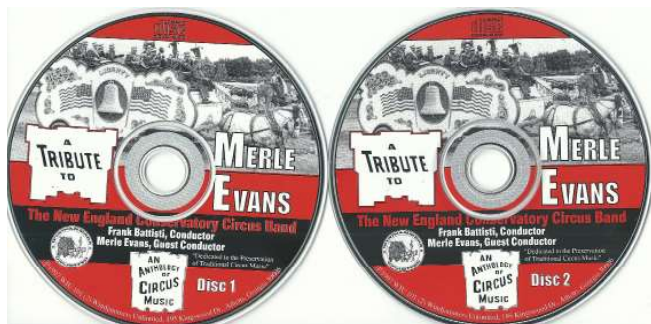
**Side Two:** *Pajamah, Olympia Hippodrome March, Fan-Tan, Royal Bridemaid's March, If I Had a Dream, Flying High, Fanfare, Medley (Caesar's Triumphal, Kentucky Sunrise, The Greatest Show on Earth), Ponderosa.*

\* \* \* \* \*

It was Evans' disappointment with **Circus Spectacular** that led his good friend Harvey Phillips (WJU Hall of Fame 2010) to arrange the 1972 LP production of **A Tribute to Merle Evans**, a multi-disk anthology of traditional circus music performed by the students and faculty members of the New England Conservatory of Music under Evans' direction.



The set included 43 tunes for a run-time of over 103 minutes, and the LP had a 5th disc where Merle talked about his career. In 1997, Windjammers Unlimited produced a special two-CD edition of this "Anthology of Circus Music" with a Windjammers label of WJU 101, and "Dedicated to the Preservation of Traditional Circus Music."



## A TRIBUTE TO MERLE EVANS ANTHOLOGY OF CIRCUS MUSIC included the following pieces:

**DISC 1:** *Tribute to Merle Fanfare* (John P. Hicks), *The Circus King* (Duble), *Woody Van's March* (king), *Trombonium* (Withrow), *March to Mecca* (Jewell), *Neel's Fashion Plate* (English), *The Thunderbolt Galop* (Huffer), *March Olevine* (Vandercook), *The Caravan Club* (King), *Among the Roses* (Barnhouse), *High and Mighty* (Jewell), *Burr's Triumphal* (Alexander), *Transcontinental March* (Hughes), *Smearin' Trombone #2* (Farshee), *Sells-Floto Triumphal* (King), *A Band Contest* (Pryor), *Honey Boys On Parade* (Cupero), *Forest City Commandery* (King), *Rival Rovers* (Alexander), *Hot Trombone* (Fillmore), *Prince Imperial* (Sanglear), *Palm Garden Rag* (Barnhouse), *Belford's Carnival March* (Alexander).

**DISC 2:** *New Madison Square Garden* (King), *Wizard of the West* (Duble), *Espana Waltz* (Waldteufel), *The Huntress* (King), *Steeplechase Galop* (Alexander), *Idaho March* (Barnhouse), *Ham Trombone* (Fillmore), *Battle of the Winds* (Duble), *Daddy's Delight* (Losey), *Baltimore's Boast* (Alexander), *Battle of Shiloh* (Barnhouse), *Clownette* (Alford), *Radio Waves* (Jewell), *Rose Ballet Dance Galop* (Chambers), *Battle Royal* (Jewell), *Sliding Jim* (Losey), *Supreme Triumph* (Jewell), *Slim Trombone* (Fillmore), *Crimson Flush* (Alexander).

\* \* \* \* \*

The **Tribute to Merle Evans Anthology** is, indeed, quite worthy. However, as good as these recordings are, they never quite captured the true circus spirit of the records that Evans had made with his under-canvas Ringling band.

In conclusion, between 1930 and 1953 the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus band recorded 44 sides with some of the best traditional circus music ever written and most of which had never appeared before on commercial phonograph records.

The popularity of these records distributed by Victor, Columbia, Capitol and Decca was such that most of them continued to be reissued in one form or another until phonograph records were replaced by CD's in the late 1980's.

Heard today in their original, unprocessed versions, these recordings provide circus music fans with the opportunity to hear how these traditional numbers were originally interpreted and performed by what was probably the finest under-canvas circus band of all time.

As a Windjammers Unlimited member, you have access to digitized mp3 versions of those recordings in 1930, 1941, 1949, and 1953. Just go to our website at MYWJU.ORG, sign-in with your WJU credentials, and find the recordings under the Preservation Tab.

# KARL KING's CIRCUS DAYS... 1910 - 1916

By Nancy Olson, WJU #1905

The following is an extract from the script that Nancy Olson used in creating her excellent video tour of the Karl King displays at the Fort Dodge Library in Iowa. That video was played for members attending the Virtual Convention on January 16, 2021, and is now available on our MYWJU.ORG website.



Nancy Olson, archivist and historian for the Karl King Band, Fort Dodge, Iowa, was invited to present a program on Karl King for the Windjammers 2021 Virtual Convention. The King video portrays Karl King during his circus days and his fifty years in Fort Dodge as composer and director.

Upon retirement from the Mid-Bell music store business in Storm Lake, IA, my husband Duane, better known as Oley, and I, along with considerable help from Keith Altemeier, retired Fort Dodge high school band director, began the task of archiving the King materials. Oley was band manager 31 years, band announcer 56 years, and a baritone player 65 years. His leadership and dedication to the King band was acknowledged by the *Fort Dodge Messenger* editor emeritus, Walter B. Stevens, who referenced Oley as "the voice of the Karl King Band."

It was Oley's friend, John Wetzel (WJU #949), a past president of Windjammers Unlimited, who invited Oley to be banquet speaker at the Windjammer summer meet in Columbia, Missouri, in 1990. This was Oley's "first" outing as a speaker on Karl King and his music. After that, Oley presented many programs on Karl King. At the end of every program he would say, "We need a HOME for the Karl King Band!"

The City of Fort Dodge had a bond issue for the building of a new library and it was rejected. The mayor called Oley and asked him to attend a public meeting in support of a revised approach. The new proposal was expanded to include office space for local history, genealogy, a King Band office, and a band rehearsal room/community room. This time the bond issue passed and the new library opened in 2001. We now have a "HOME for the Karl King Band" and are grateful to the City of Fort Dodge. With the opening of the library, we archived all the King memorabilia the family had given to the King Band and initiated the [karlking.us](http://karlking.us) website under the guidance of Windjammer Alan Spohnheimer (WJU #3190) as webmaster.

Karl King was born February 21, 1891 in Paintersville, Ohio. The family moved to Canton, Ohio, where he attended school and upon finishing 8<sup>th</sup> grade, he worked four years for the *Canton Repository* newspaper as an apprentice printer. During this time he ignited a passion for music.

King purchased a cornet and played in the **Canton Marine Band** and **Thayer Military Band**. In later years he commented, *"training on your instrument just meant sitting in with musicians, learning from them till you could cut the giblets"*.

William E. Strassner, director of Canton's famed Thayer Military Band (1903-1958), also operated a music studio, led church choirs, was a popular baritone vocalist, and he played the double-bell euphonium. Will Strassner influenced Karl King, switching him from cornet to baritone and encouraging him to develop his many talents.....evidenced by **THAYER MILITARY BAND** or **T.M.B.** – the first march written by Karl King. It was published in 1909 by Strassner. The **GREATER CANTON** march, dedicated to W.E. Strassner was also published in 1909 by Strassner.



King in T.M.B. Uniform



Will Strassner and his double-bell euphonium

King's first professional band experience was with the **Fred Neddermeyer Band** in Columbus, Ohio. He composed **NEDDERMEYER TRIUMPHAL MARCH**, published in 1911 by C. L. Barnhouse, Oskaloosa, IA. It was dedicated "to my friend Fred Neddermeyer and the Neddermeyer Concert Band." Mr. King said *"the band has 44 members, and this was my first professional playing experience."* By the end of 1909 King had 10 compositions published by 3 different publishers, quite an accomplishment for someone with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education.



In 1910, the circus would now provide an opportunity for Karl King to play music and to compose. It is likely King answered the "First Call" in *The Billboard* magazine for a baritone player in **Robinson's Famous Show** with director, Appolos Woodring Van Anda. The instructions were to take the train to Emporia, Kansas and join the circus there. However, when King arrived the circus was no longer in town. He was approached by a "grifter" who obliged King by purchasing a train ticket for him to the next town where the circus was to perform. King later learned his benefactor *"had been detained by the local authorities who were dissatisfied with his mathematical calculations in making change"*. King later said in a rather thoughtful manner *"the only man in Emporia who would help a stranded boy was one who just got out of jail. Must be a sermon in that someplace"*. Robinson's Famous Show ended in Grenada, Mississippi on December 2nd. Karl King wrote **ROBINSON'S GRAND ENTRÉE** on this last stand, using nib pen and ink well, seated on a trunk and using an oil lamp. The tune was published in 1911 by C.L. Barnhouse and dedicated to Robinson's Circus. That same year, he published **WOODY VAN'S MARCH**, dedicated to Appolos Woodring Van Anda, bandmaster Robinson Famous Shows.

In 1911, King answered a "First Call" to **Yankee Robinson's Circus** as does Woody Van.



**King on Baritone (upper left) with Yankee Robinson's Circus**

On the back of the above photo of the band is Karl King's handwritten script: *"Yankee Robinson's Circus band 1911. Theodore Stout director. Karl King baritone."*

The 1911 Route Sheet on display at the Fort Dodge Library reveals an opening date of April 1<sup>st</sup> in Rolfe, IA. Sixteen Iowa stops are followed by a run to South & North Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas. The season ended November 12<sup>th</sup>.

Col. Fred Buchanan of Granger, IA, was proprietor of Yankee Robinson's Circus, 1905-1920. The *BANDWAGON* magazine reads: *"During the 1908-1920 seasons it was a neat looking show (converted to train in 1908) with good equipment and featured a fine street parade."* It was a

medium sized show made up of 20 rail cars including 2 advance, 5 stock, 8 flat and 5 coach cars.

King published 13 compositions in 1911. He used the non de plume – Carl Lawrence – when he wrote **SALUTE TO THE SULTAN**, dedicated *"to my friend, Theo Stout, Bandmaster"*.

It was in this era that circus music took on a new voice in that using standard popular music and marches for the performers did not always *"cut the mustard"* [A Karl King expression.] Composers took to writing music that fit the act – such as trapeze, aerial, animal, clown or Roman rider's performances -- music created to intensify and emulate the performance.



**Yankee Robinson**

One cannot leave the **Yankee Robinson Circus** without honoring one of the grand old names in American circus history. **Yankee Robinson** had a career in the circus that ran over 50 years. He started his own circus in the 1840's and was a major figure in the circus world. His final claim to lasting fame was in helping the Ringling Brothers of McGregor, Iowa

through the first year of their tent show. Ringling's first circus was titled **YANKEE ROBINSON AND RINGLING BROS. GREAT DOUBLE SHOW, CIRCUS and CARAVAN**. Yankee Robinson would appear in center ring announcing a prophecy of *"the future glory of the Ringling Brothers"*. He was absolutely right.

In 1884 this circus was in Iowa. In between runs, Fayette Lodawick Yankee Robinson became ill on the train. He was taken off the train in Jefferson, IA, cared for at a hotel by some fellow members of the Masonic Lodge. Upon Robinson's death on September 4, 1884, they arranged for his funeral and burial. It was known that Robinson wanted to be *"buried where he dropped"*. In 1890, an obelisk inscribed with the Masonic emblem reads: *"In memorium, and erected by Sells Bros. Show and the Ringling Bros."* Years later, Karl King and his band came through Jefferson and played music at the grave of Yankee Robinson. Circus people remember their own.

The year 1912 had a few notable headlines. The Titanic sinks, Fenway Park opens in Boston, Mrs. Taft plants 1st cherry tree in Washington, D.C., and Karl King joins **Sells Floto Circus** as a windjammer. Walter P. English with his walrus mustache was bandmaster of the Sells Floto Circus. The band wore bright red, high-collared jackets with gold braid and white trousers. The band's roster included five others for whom King dedicated tunes: H. F. Young

(**SIR HENRY**), H.C.Werner and H. M. Coplin (**PLUCKING ROSES**), Benjamin West (**WALSENBERG GALOP**), and Don Montgomery (**ECLIPSE GALOP**).

English had toured Europe with **Barnum & Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth** as a tuba player 1897-1902 under the baton of Carl Clair. Without a doubt English brought a new version of circus life and its music to Karl King. English wrote his most famous march, *Royal Decree*, and dedicated it to Karl King. King wrote **GARLAND ENTRÉE** march, "*dedicated to my friend W. P. English, Bandmaster, Sells Floto Shows.*"

In 1912 the horse and buggy were the most common form of transportation and King's **GARLAND ENTREE** would be a part of the SPECTACLE, the procession that took place around the HIPPODROME inside the BIG TOP....all horses absolutely "spectacular" in garlands of flowers.

I located a **Sells Floto Daily Diary** with 24 pages of daily entries of events on show stands. Sample entries are: *the BIG TOP was 160 feet, a round top with three 50 foot middle pieces; Vic Graham leaves (to whom King dedicated A NIGHT IN JUNE); Harry Willis, supreme master of the steam calliope. Those who heard him play "Holy City" and "Silver Threads Among the Gold" will never forget it; Oct. 9 in Chickasha, OK, Buffalo Bill our opposition; and on Oct. 16 in Ardmore, OK, Fred Buchanan of Yankee Robinson show a visitor here.*

The proprietors of the **Sells Floto Circus** are H. H. Tammen and F. G. Bonfils, some of the most colorful men of the Old West. They were owners of the *Denver Post* newspaper called the *Evening Post*. Above their headquarters' door - hung this quote: "*O Justice, when expelled from other habitations, make this your dwelling place*" – an indication of their journalism style which spotlighted crime and corruption.

In 1913, the Lincoln Highway opens as the first paved road coast to coast. The IRS levies and collects an income tax for the first time and Karl King comes to Fort Dodge on August 10<sup>th</sup> with Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth. The BIG ONE as show folks called it. The bandmaster is Ned Brill. The show had opened in Madison Square Garden for what was routinely a four week engagement. Karl King would recall the experience as "*one of my favorite times, in New York and appearing in the Garden*".

The street parade was led by the Two Hemispheres Bandwagon with bandleader Edwin H. Brill for whom King dedicated "**BARNUM & BAILEY'S FAVORITE**", King's most famous composition and known world-wide. The assistant conductor was Cleveland Dayton, a trombone player and later a band director in Ottumwa, IA for whom King dedicated "**DEFENDING CIRCLE**".

It was on the **Two Hemispheres Bandwagon**, drawn by 40 horses, 4 abreast, that Karl King rode many miles, parading in many cities.



The **TWO HEMISPHERES BAND WAGON** had been commissioned by James Bailey in 1902. Bailey had decided that Europe was played out, so he began planning a triumphal return to America for the 1903 season. During his time in Europe, the upstart Ringling Brothers had grown their circus in size and status. Bailey needed a "big splash" to publicize his homecoming. The band wagon measures 28 feet long, 14 feet tall, and weighed 13,000 pounds.

This bandwagon has an interesting Iowa history. Fred Buchanan had it on his farm in Granger, Iowa in 1932. Jacob Wagner, Circus Fans of America member, arranged to have it moved to the Iowa State Fairgrounds where it was rescued by Barlett Joshua (B.J.) Palmer of Davenport, Iowa, founder of the first chiropractic school in the world. There were many more moves, and most recently in June 2016 it was purchased at auction by Peter Gorman, of Vancouver, Canada, for \$250,000.00. The bandwagon currently resides in West Baden Springs, Indiana.

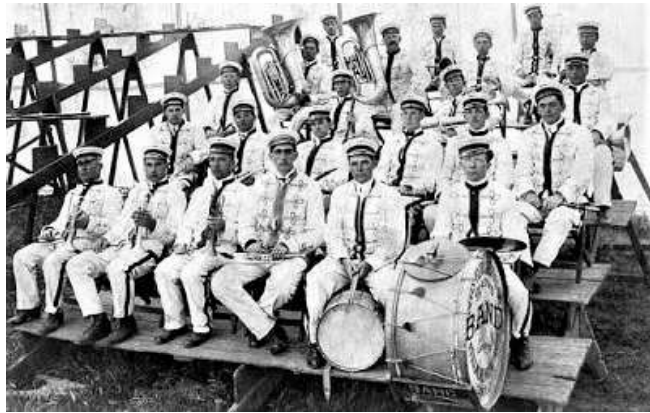
In 1913, the Barnum & Bailey Center Ring Band Concert heralded a repertoire of heavy overtures. The list includes, Wagner's *TANNHAUSER*, Suppe's *MORNING, NOON & NIGHT*, Weber's *OBERON*, Rossini's *WILLIAM TELL*, Verdi's *LA TRAVIATA*, Bizet's *CARMEN*, Verdi's *RIGOLETTO* and Donizetti's *LUCIA di LAMMERMOOR*. The program lists Karl King as a member of a quartet in the selection *RIGOLETTO* and as a sextet member in *LUCIA*. [Sidenote: *LUCIA* was arranged by Andrew Glover (WJU #423) and first played by the King Band with the sextet featuring "Jive for Five" and Oley as the sextet.]

The dazzling Spectacle was **CLEOPATRA**. The dancers of the enormous ballet were trained by the maître de ballet of the Metropolitan Opera House. There were 3,000 magnificent costumes from New York and Paris. **CLEOPATRA** employed 1,250 show folks... with nearly \$500,000.00 spent on the show before a ticket was even sold. There was a chorus of 400 voices, 300 dancing girls, 750 horses, 110 cages, 85 train cars, 40 elephants. Each robe for an elephant was valued at \$12,000.00. The street parade was 3 miles long. The waterproof tent covered 20 acres. Meals were served daily to 4,500. The Big Top could accommodate 15,000 people in the "house".



A succession of acts followed the SPEC. Miss Victoria Davenport, an 18 year old English recruit, presented a sensational act of being the only woman to accomplish a forward somersault on galloping horses' backs. The elephants, under director Harry Mooney, played baseball. Jitsu champions showed how a woman trained in Japanese self-defense might easily overcome an assailant. And so much, much more. There were nearly 500 participants in the featured acts. Performers were Spaniards, Japanese, Chinese, Austrians, French, Germans, Turks, Russians, and Portuguese.

In the 1914 season, Karl King was hired as bandmaster for the **Sells Floto & Buffalo Bill Wild West Combined Show**. So, King's trouping days with Col. Cody began!



In this photo of the **Sells Floto & Buffalo Bill Wild West** band for 1914, Karl King is in the front row center, now playing cornet and wearing the director's uniform. The bandmaster also had the job of mail delivery!

In the Sells Floto 1914 contract with Alonzo Leach and handwritten by King, it reads "*Play flute & piccolo (low pitch) Report Denver, Colorado - March 20th for rehearsal Windsor Hotel*". The contract is signed by Karl L. King and artist Alonzo Leach. Smaller script reads: "*Pay twelve dollars weekly for each week's work performed*", etc.

When the circus landed in Canton, Ohio to perform, the Thayer Military Band folks welcomed all windjammers to a banquet. The Canton Repository reads "*This is the show's first visit to Canton. It is heralded as one of the best on the road. The free street parade will be 2 miles long. Col. Cody will positively appear in the parade. Cody has carried the United States flag to every city of consequence. Performances 2:15 and 8:15. There are 5 bands and 2 calliopes and 50 acts. Reserved seats sold at Powell's Music Store. It was King's **MELODY SHOP** (1910, C.L. Barnhouse) that was dedicated to E. E. Powell and Al Shortage.*"

For the 1915 season, King composed **WYOMING DAYS** dedicated to the Cowboy and **ON THE WARPATH** and **PASSING OF THE RED MAN**, dedicated to "my esteemed friend, Col. W. F. Cody". All three were typically performed in sequence. Mr. King always referred to Mr. Cody as "The

Colonel" and King would wistfully say "*All he had to do was ride out there on his big white horse and TIP HIS HAT, and he'd get a standing ovation*".

**SELLS FLOTO TRIUMPHAL** was dedicated to the Sells Floto Circus. The equestrian director Rhoda Royal wore a black top hat, red jacket and announced all the performances. He was a noted horse trainer. His show horse could dance the tango and the two-step, popular dances of the day. Karl King wrote **KENTUCKY SUNRISE**, a two-step dedicated to Rhoda Royal. Captain H. C. Devlin was the organizer of Devlin's Zouaves. They wore a fez, short jacket, white leggings and baggy pants. The Zouaves gave a thrilling performance of military tactics including scaling a wall, gun spinning and storming the fort. King wrote **GALLANT ZOUAVES** for this feature.

In 1916, Professor Karl L. King is the Musical Director and Prof. W. P. English is Assistant Musical Director. The Program reads: *The most wonderful band ever carried as an adjunct of any circus, is that directed by the famous composer, Karl L. King, who has furnished from his genius the melody of half the great bands of the world. Augmented also by the sweet tones of a new and wonderful invention, Gabriel's Horns, the Sells Floto Concert Band gives forth a symphony of tone and melody that can only be approached by mammoth organizations that charge admissions for themselves alone – and oftentimes play as feature numbers the compositions of Sell Floto's Director, the Famous Karl L. King. Before the beginning of the main show, Prof. King's Famous Band will play a concert of overtures from the following operas and compositions: Overtures, Selections by Rossini, Suppe, Offenbach, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Tobani. The list concludes with four by Prof. Karl King: **ALTAR OF GENIUS, GYPSY QUEEN, PRINCESS OF INDIA, A NIGHT IN JUNE.***

W. P. English, tuba player and band leader, was with King's band in 1916. He became ill in Denver, CO, died there with Hank Young at his side. The news of this tuba player/conductor's death cast a gloom over the entire Sells Floto show folks. At the night performance in Norwood, OK, Thursday, June 8, Karl King and his band presented their program of ALL Walter P. English compositions to honor him.

It was during 1916 that "*Along Came Ruth*" and Karl King began dating Miss Lovett in his hometown of Canton, OH. Wait for Part 2 in the SEP-OCT 2021 *Circus Fanfare* or go to our website and watch the video !

The video available at [MYWJU.ORG](http://MYWJU.ORG) portrays Karl King during his circus days and his time in Fort Dodge as composer and band director. The background music for the program is a 1956 recording of a Karl L. King Municipal band concert directed by Karl King. Nancy Olson played clarinet under the baton of Karl King beginning in 1955. King memorabilia is stored in the King band office in the Fort Dodge Public Library and with advance notice can be made available for viewing should you visit Fort Dodge, Iowa.

# BRITISH ISLES 19th CENTURY CIRCUS BANDS

News Extracts Collected by Gavin Holman, WJU #3943 - [www.ibew.co.uk](http://www.ibew.co.uk)

PART 1 - 1838 to 1863

The life and times of circus and menagerie bands in the British Isles in the 19th century – extracts from contemporary reports:

- At the time of the coronation of Queen Victoria, in June 1838, **Wombwell's Menagerie** was in Falmouth. The Menagerie Band played in the town's grand procession and at the celebration dinner on a grandstand erected over the entrance to the meat market. At this time, the leader of the Menagerie Band was John Bright, playing his keyed bugle.
- Mr Deane's coachbuilding firm in Southampton created a



new "superbly emblazoned" carriage for Mr Batty's Circus Band in early 1844. Later, in October 1844, when **Batty's Circus** visited Cork in Ireland, the wagon was described as "an elegant machine of novel structure, ornamented with several emblematical figures, and carrying the Circus Band, who looked like a group of huntsmen ready for the field."

- **Cock's Circus Band** attended a soirée for the local Catholics at Hartlepool Town Hall, after the circus performance had ended, in March 1848.
- **Wombwell's Menagerie Band** was engaged to play at the Kingsbridge and Dodbrooke Races in September 1851, together with the Ermington Brass Band.
- **Macarté's Circus Band** had a narrow escape at Oxford in August 1853 – in turning a corner, their vehicle was upset, and the musicians scattered in the road. They were all more or less bruised and the drummer received a concussion of the spine.
- In the early 1850's Wombwell's Menagerie had a fine band and one player was John Walker (1824-1890), from Huddersfield, originally an expert ophicleide player, and Richard Sutcliffe, of Honley, was the band leader. Walker

later played with the **Cook's Circus Band** for a while before moving to Merthyr Tydfil and becoming instructor to the Cyfarthfa Band at the Crayshaw Ironworks.

- In January 1857 **Henry Brown's Cirque Unique Company**, in Norwich, described itself as having "*the best band ever heard in a Circus.*" Following this boast, **Hengler's Cirque Varieté**, offered to back Charles Hengler's Reed, Brass, or String Bands (leader W. Allen) to "*play against the one he so vaunts, for the sum of £50.*" Another band, that of **W. Cooke**, in Hackney, attempted to take up the challenge, but was rapidly rejected by Hengler on the grounds that the original challenge was to Brown's Circus Band only. However he did state that "*in order to gratify your laudable ambition we will give you an opportunity of testing your abilities with ours on the following conditions only: The respective Bands to be equal in number, and to form, alternately, three distinct bands - viz., Reed, Brass, and String, and that each leader compose and arrange seven different and original pieces, to be played at the said trial – viz., 1st, a March; 2nd, an Air, with introductions, variations, and finale; 3rd, set of Waltzes; 4th, a Schottische; 5th, a Polka; 6th, a Pas Redouble; 7th, a Gallop. Each leader to give satisfactory proof that the various compositions are his own. If those conditions suit we shall expect to hear from you by letter, naming the sum to be competed for; if not, no further notice will be taken of the matter. The above offer is also open to all travelling Circus Bands in the United Kingdom. In addition, I shall be happy to afford Mr. Wilson, leader of Mr. W. Cooke's band, or the leader of any Circus band travelling, an opportunity of testing his or their abilities against my own, as leader, composer, and arranger. William Allen, Leader, Hengler's Circus Band.*" Suffice it to say, no band took up the challenge!
- **Ginnett's Circus Band** played around Cardiff to celebrate the Princess Royal's marriage in January 1858.
- **Wombwell's Menagerie Band** "discoursed sweet music, to the delight of those who had an ear for such" at the Walsall Whitsuntide Fair in May 1858.
- **Brown's Circus Band**, in a handsome carriage drawn by four cream coloured horses, provided entertainment at the Colchester Garrison Steeplechases in April 1859.
- Joseph Taylor was leader of **Macarté & Clarke's Circus Band** in the mid-1850's, and he went on to form his own band in 1859, based in Ipswich, available for "flower shows, regattas, anniversaries, etc."
- In August 1859 the **Oxford Regatta** engaged a brass band, which included some of the best performers of the **Wombwell's Menagerie Band** (which was in the city) to perform on the University Boat Club Barge.



- The following month, in September 1859, **Wombwell's Menagerie** exhibited at Salisbury. The leader of the band, John Shaft Hartwell, had been drinking hard for a week, and in a state bordering on delirium tremens, committed suicide in his room at the Saracen's Head Inn. Mr Pickup, a bandsman who shared the room with Hartwell, witnessed the death.

- Walsall - 28 April 1860 - *To Whom Does the Space Behind the Grand Stand Belong. Some time ago notices were posted in the town, intimating that the Alhambra circus would visit Walsall on Wednesday last; but on Tuesday large posters informed the natives that the above talented company were prevented carrying out their arrangements, through the avaricious demands of the lessee of the Lammas Lands, who charged £5 per day for the ground required by the company. Wednesday morning the circus band perambulated the streets, and intimated that the company would perform in Wednesbury. and would not visit Walsall again till a more conscionable person, who would let the land upon more reasonable terms, become lessee of the land. This affair might have been passed over unnoticed, but for the fact that it suggests the query by what authority does the lessee acquire the right to let the land - as he has been doing for some time past - during that period it belongs to the freeholders? This is a subject deserving the attention of the rate payers. and one it is to hoped that will not be lost sight of until fully cleared up.*

- **Jim Myers Mammoth Circus** was advertising for a circus band in July 1860.

[James Washington Myers was an American equestrian and circus entrepreneur who began his career in the United States. He went on to perform in Great Britain with Howes & Cushing Circus. When that circus returned to the U.S. Meyers stayed in the U.K. His J.W. Meyer's Great American Circus toured extensively in England and France.]

- **The Foresters Court Britannia** in Croydon, as one of their charitable events for the Widows and Orphans Fund, arranged for a circus to attend the town for 20 guineas in November 1860, selling the tickets to raise money for the fund. The Foresters paraded through the town, headed by half a dozen of the brethren in full Robin Hood costumes, followed by the circus band in a carriage drawn by six horses.

- November 1860 also saw **Batthey's Menagerie** visiting Llandovery, when the Menagerie Band took part in the procession celebrating the cutting of the first sod of the third section of the Central Wales Railway – sharing the musical efforts with the Llandilo Volunteer Band, and the Llandovery Band.

- **Newsome's Circus Band** was engaged to perform at the Hurdle Races at Brighton in May 1861.

- In July 1861, **Newsome's Circus** was in Oxford, and the circus band played a small part in the suppression of the plans of the Oxford Mayor to veto the amusements of the people of Oxford – having lost support for his proposed bye-laws, the circus band turned up at his house and played "The Fine Old English Gentleman" – to the delight of the local populace.

- **Hogini's Circus Band** was engaged to take part in the procession celebrating the inauguration of the new mayor of Cork, in January 1862.

- New Year's Day, 1862, in Norwich found three bands entertaining the crowds after the chiming of the hour at midnight – **Howlett's Brass Band**, **Newsome's Circus Band** and **Manders' Menagerie Band**. The latter made an imposing entry – "the performers were seated in their ornamental locomotive orchestra, which on this occasion was drawn by two young elephants and several fine camels. The bands occupied stations apart from each other and played alternatively until the new year had advanced some hour or two. Some of the pieces were well played, and the musicians were frequently applauded by their monster audience."

- The **Alhambra Circus Band** was engaged to play at the Northamptonshire Agricultural Sheep Shearing Competition at Northampton in June 1862.

- **Sangers' Circus Brass Band** – appeared with the circus at Greenock in July 1862.

- **Hengler's Cirque Variete Band** was placed at the disposal of the Greenock Foresters when they took part in the grand procession through the town on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the Albert Harbour in August 1862. Following this, in September, the Foresters returned the compliment by attending the Circus en masse, parading through the streets to the establishment, preceded by the circus band.

- Visitors to the Derbyshire Agricultural Society Show was entertained by **Newsome's Circus Band** and the **Alhambra Circus Band** in September 1862

- In March 1863, **Newsome's Circus Band**, in a carriage with four white horses, took part in the parade in Leicester to celebrate the marriage of Prince Edward to Princess Alexandra of Denmark. Madame Newsome was mounted on a pet white steed while members of the company rode abreast of her, holding a scroll with the inscription "Happy May They Be".

- **Howe's Circus** visited Dunfermline in September 1863, with the circus band parading the main streets on wagon tops, drawn by eight beautiful horses, sleek-skinned, long-tailed, and parti-coloured.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## RAOUL CAMUS, WJU #1661



Windjammer member **Raoul François Camus** is a first-generation American, his father having come to the United States from France and his mother from Sweden. His father's sister had married an American G.I. and that started the emigrations that followed.

Raoul was born in Buffalo, NY on December 5, 1930. Obviously, the U.S. Depression (1929-1939) had begun and was soon in full swing, hitting hardest in 1933-1934, a time co-incident with the Chicago World's Fair celebrating a "Century of Progress". Raoul's father was a pastry chef and had the opportunity to work at the World's Fair, so the family moved to Chicago. When the Fair ended, he opened a pastry shop in Oak Park, IL. However, times remained tough for the family. As a six-year-old, Raoul was sent to Stockholm, Sweden to live with his maternal grandmother.

At this point, the family moved to New York where Raoul's father worked in hotels. His father had also joined the Drum & Bugle Corps of the French War Veterans, playing clarion (a French Bugle in Bb).



With the war effort building in Europe, the decision was made for Raoul to return to the United States. Hitler marched into Poland on September 1. Thus, on September 2, 1939, the unaccompanied not-yet-nine-year-old was put on a ship headed for New York City. The journey took ten days as the ship took action to avoid submarines.

Raoul joined the French Drum & Bugle Corp., initially playing drums and then switching to clarion. When the U.S. entered World War II, many of those in that Corp joined the war effort. One old-timer formed a youth corps and called it the Cadets Lafayette. Raoul participated in it. Meanwhile, his father was then serving in Europe with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the U.S. intelligence agency during WWII and the predecessor to the CIA.



As a freshman at a Catholic high school, Raoul became more serious about his music. Almost 6 feet tall and 200 pounds at this point, Raoul opted for the tuba and enjoyed playing. However, when he wanted to pursue more serious private lessons, his teacher persuaded him to switch to French Horn. A horn was purchased and Raoul was given a ranked list of potential professionals to contact relative to lessons. He started with the name on top and was accepted. Each lesson was \$5. After a year, Raoul spotted his instructor's obituary in the newspaper. That was the first time he knew that his instructor, Bruno Jaenicke (1887-1946), had been the principal horn with the New York Philharmonic for 21 years.

With his father's signature of approval, the under-age Raoul was able to join the band of the 69th "Fighting Irish" Regiment State Guard comprised of those too young or too old to be drafted. When the war ended, the State Guard band became the 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division National Guard Band. Raoul served this band for 27 years, the last twenty as bandmaster, and retiring at the rank of CW4.

### Band concert

The 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division band will perform a concert today in the downtown urban renewal area. Sponsored by the Greater Watertown Chamber of Commerce, the performance will be from noon to 1:30 p.m. under the direction of Chief Warrant Officer Raoul F. Camus, band director.

7/10/1968



Upon graduation from high school, Raoul thought he would join the Marine Corp. However, two of the veterans in the French Drum & Bugle Corp convinced him to go to college instead. So, he enrolled in Queens College, City University of New York (CUNY), as a music major.

As a college graduate, Raoul married and he worked for **International Music Company**, a major music publisher in New York City. There were only four employees: the mostly-absent-owner, a secretary, a shipping clerk, and the manager, who was the proverbial "Chief, Cook and Bottle-washer". Yes, Raoul was that manager! During this time, Raoul's first child was born, he was pursuing a Master of Arts degree by taking night classes at Columbia University's Teachers College, and he was playing French horn professionally. Unfortunately, the marriage suffered and soon ended.

With his latest degree and a temporary teaching license in hand, Raoul landed a position at Newtown High School in Elmhurst, a neighborhood in the New York City borough of Queens. He taught music and math. He was there 2½ years. While there, he married Amy and they have now been partners for 58 years.

Once Raoul passed the extensive teaching exams existing in New York at that time, he moved to a junior high school as music teacher for three years before serving five years at Martin Van Buren High School in Queens Village, NY. Next up was Queensborough Community College (QCC), one of seven community colleges within the CUNY system. Raoul was there for the next 26 years, retiring in 1995 as professor emeritus of music. Along the way, Raoul earned a Ph.D. in music administration from New York University.

Before his retirement from QCC, Raoul was invited to serve as a Fulbright guest professor in Oberschützen, Austria. For one semester he lectured on American music, delivering his presentations in German. He also became deeply involved in the Internationale Gesellschaft zur Erforschung und Förderung der Blasmusik (IGEB - i.e., International Society for the Investigation and Promotion of Wind Music) and is now an Honorary Member.

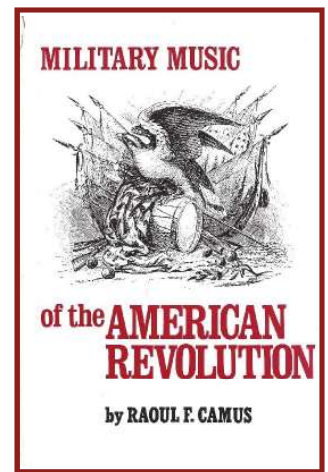
Raoul joined Windjammers Unlimited in 1994. As is usually the case, it was other WJU members who encouraged his participation. Cornet player Joe Losh (1919-2003, WJU #868) and clarinetist Vinnie Gugleotti (1911-2011, WJU #1387) were past Sergeants of Raoul's in the military band and active Windjammers. Just before that Convention started, he was in a Japanese restaurant in Sarasota and met Buster and Barbara Bailey (WJU #17 & 18) and received an enthusiastic Windjammers' welcome. After the first Convention, Raoul became one of our conductors, and several times conducted the Ringling Museum Band. While now 90 years young, Raoul is still hopeful he can once again attend one of our Windjammers events and conduct a session.

In addition to his other talents, Raoul is a respected author.

In 1976 his "**Military Music of the American Revolution**" was published by the University of North Carolina Press as a Bicentennial project, and in 1992 he prepared an anthology of wind and percussion music that was published as Volume 12 in G.K. Hall's series "**Three Centuries of American Music**." He has also written numerous articles on bands and their repertoires. He was contributing editor for bands for both editions of **The Grove Dictionary of American Music**, contributing five major and 50 minor entries on bands and band personalities. He was elected an Honorary member of the American Bandmasters Association and appointed Historian.

To celebrate Raoul's 90th birthday, IGEB is publishing a 500-page Festival Book containing 22 articles on wind music by his friends and distinguished scholars and 135 pages of his Austrian Fulbright lectures.

In summary, Raoul is an outstanding musicologist specializing in American music. Since traditional circus music is a key part of that, we have been delighted to have Raoul as Windjammer Member #1661 these past 27 years and we wish for his continued participation for many, many more years!



# OUT OF THE PAST

By Jim Juhnke, WJU 318

Jerry Jimmerson's **Circus Snippets a'la King** feature in the January-February 2021 *Circus Fanfare* highlighted Karl King's waltz *In Old Portugal*, noting that it was written for the "death-defying aerial performance of Miss Lillian Leitzel."

Those comments reminded me of my first time at a Windjammers Convention ... now forty years ago! At that Sarasota event in January 1981, Merle Evans was the conductor. He sat on a high wooden stool. The first session was after lunch. There were only a few of us present since we were there early.

One of our officers asked Merle for permission to play Miss Leitzel's act selection, "*Crimson Petal Waltz*" by Fred Jewell, which Merle had never used following her death as a result of an equipment failure during a performance in Copenhagen, Denmark in February 1931. Merle said, "Yes, it has been too long a time." Indeed, it had been a month short of 50 years since he had conducted this piece.

The first recording that afternoon was *Crimson Petal*. On that day there was no mention of *In Old Portugal*. *Crimson Petal* was not on the recording list nor included in Sunday's concert. The concert play list was *The Jewell March* (E. Mutchler 1909), *Moonlight Melody Serenade* (Karl King 1943), *Persian Lamb Rag* (P. Wenrich 1928), *Kaiser Waltz* (*Emperor Waltz* - J. Strauss c1890), *Glendale March* (R. Paul Harper 1980), *Buckeye Fanfare* (R. Paul Harper 1955), *Pageantry March* (Karl King 1929), *Georgia Girl* (Karl King 1914), *Comedy Tom March* (Gus King 1917), *In the Twilight Waltz* (Karl King 1912) and *Bennett's Triumphal March* (Ribble 1925)

The 1981 Sarasota band consisted of 58 musicians, featuring an excellent balance. Included were six horns and four tubas (that's the best setup and will never happen again!), Bob Hills, Jr. on the single piccolo, and no flutes. The ringmaster was William (Boom-Boom) Browning.

It was the "First of May" for some of us at Sarasota in 1981, including myself, Ron Keller, William Albrecht, Doug MacLeod, John Monks, Harry Brabec, and three of my friends from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. What great memories! My best to Windjammers everywhere.



**Miss Lillian Leitzel**

Leopoldina Alitza Pelikan

1/2/1892 - 2/15/1931

## WHEN WAS THE LAST CENTER RING CONCERT AT A TENTED PROFESSIONAL U.S. CIRCUS PERFORMANCE?

The answer would be the July 15, 2015 Center Ring Concert by Windjammers Unlimited under the Cole Bros. Circus Big Top Tent during the Worldwide Circus Summit in West Springfield, MA. Our concert performance was on the sawdust prior to the evening circus performance that began at 7:30 p.m. This was a Windjammers Unlimited highlight for certain.

The owner of the Cole Bros. Circus, Johnny Pugh, was in tears that night, saying he had never believed he would again witness a circus band **in concert** under the Big Top. And we made it happen. Earlier that day, the Windjammers Seminar Band gave a program on the music that might have been used for circus acts. Afterward, Barbara Byrd, owner of the Carson & Barnes Circus, also had tears in her eyes, saying how much our music reminded her of the performers and their acts that had appeared in her circus in "the good old days".

Unfortunately, less than a month after the WJU Center Ring Concert, the Cole Bros. Circus held its final performance as a result of financial pressures and activist protests. The name exists, but they have yet to reopen.





# OBITUARIES

## BUD STAHL (1930-2020), WJU #2571



Harlow Lauren (Bud) Stahl, 90, of Bellevue, OH passed away November 17, 2020. Born in Bellevue May 2, 1930, he spent all but 10 years of his life in Bellevue. He graduated from Tulsa OK Central High School in 1949, Colorado A&M University in 1954 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and served in the Army 1955-57 before returning to Bellevue.

Bud will be remembered for his love of Carol E. (Daw) his wife of 67 years, his devotion to his Parents and preserving the legacy of the Stahl family in Bellevue, his many friendships, and for the strength of his convictions.

Bud's life work was the family farm which he took over from his father in 1957. The farm is a designated Ohio Historic Family Farm and an Ohio Century Farm, having been in the family since 1895. Bud sang in the choir directed by his sister Helen at First Congregational Church and served as church moderator.

Bud's passion in life was music. He was a percussionist for over 75 years. As a member of the Colorado A&M Marching & Concert Band he was inducted as a life member into the Kappa Kappa Psi Honorary Band Fraternity. While in the Army he served in the United States Army Signal Corps Band at Fort Gordon. Locally, he played with the Sandusky and Green Springs Community Bands, the North Coast Concert Band, and the Windjammers Unlimited Band.

## JANICE CUMMINGS (1943-2021), WJU #1969



A beloved daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, sister-in-law, musician and friend to many has answered the call of the Father. On April 27, 2021 the spirit of Janice Marie Cummings took flight. Her mission is closed at 78 years of life, passing peacefully at Oldorf Hospice House in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Janice was born on March 21, 1943 in Clinton, IA, the only child to Ruth Jeannette Ridgway and Donald Paul Ridgway. She got her Masters degree in Physical Education from University of Northern Iowa in 1969. While going to UNI she met Richard (Dick) Cummings (WJU #3272, dec) and got married in Clinton, IA in 1966. They moved to Illinois where she taught Physical Education at Round Lake Beach

Elementary School and McGee Middle School. They retired in 1993 and moved to Cedar Rapids, IA where they spent time with their grandchildren, restoring music and traveling in their Airstream trailer. Janice also loved to bake, crochet, sew and mostly play music in the many bands with which she was associated, including the New Horizons Band, the WBCCI Airstream Club Band, Windjammers Unlimited, and the Dixie Notes Plus, which she directed. She loved playing handbells, clarinet, saxophone, and percussion, and was also a handbell director and musical librarian.

After 50 years of marriage, her husband passed from this life on April 14, 2016. She leaves her son Ian Ross (Isabelle Andree) Cummings, her two grandchildren Christophe Jean Cummings and Alyson Jeannette Cummings and her dogs Norman and Buddy. Now they lay her away to eternal rest next to Richard and her parents. May she rest in Peace.

## WINDJAMMERS CONTACT INFORMATION

Windjammers Unlimited, Inc. is a 501(c)3 circus music historical society in the education category. It was founded in 1971 with the goal of preserving traditional American circus music. The organization generally holds its annual convention in January in Sarasota/Bradenton, FL and a summer meet in July at varying locations. Windjammers Unlimited, the WJU Logo, WJU, and Windjammers Circus Band, among others, are trademarks or service marks of Windjammers Unlimited, Inc. Other product, service, organization and company names mentioned herein may be the trademarks or service marks of their respective owners and no rights therein are granted by WJU.

Windjammers membership is open to all of those interested in the preservation, education and/or performance of traditional American circus music. We welcome playing and non-playing members alike. Membership Dues are for the period January 1 through December 31 and are pro-rated quarterly for new members joining after March 31<sup>st</sup>. Current annual dues are \$10 for Student members, \$40 for Individuals, and \$47 for a Family membership of two members residing at the same mailing address. Optional Tax-Deductible Donations are welcomed. Our Membership Application and additional information can be found on our website at [MYWJU.ORG](http://MYWJU.ORG). Student and International Members must opt for *Circus Fanfares* as PDFs. The Circus Fanfare is published bi-monthly. Please email [circusfanfare@mywju.org](mailto:circusfanfare@mywju.org) with comments/suggestions.

**Our address is:** 1169 Belle Meade Island Dr., Miami, FL 33138-5253

**Our website is:** [mywju.org](http://mywju.org). Officer and Trustee contact information is shown on Page 2.



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DENTON, TX  
PERMIT NO. 438



This issue of the *Circus Fanfare* was printed by  
Gainesville Printing Co., Gainesville, TX



Two Hemispheres Bandwagon.

*Photo courtesy Bob Harmel, WJU #3659*

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

Special Virtual Events scheduled for July 9-11, 2021. WJU Band at Baraboo, WI July 10<sup>th</sup>  
WJU Annual Convention #50 - January 11-16, 2022 at Marriott Courtyard, Bradenton, Florida  
The 2022 Summer Meet is planned for Springfield, MO (July 20-24) with Marvin Manning as host.