

WINDJAMMERS



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ENGFORD FAMILY SHOWS Air Calliope Truck

Photo courtesy Circus World Museum

*WJU...Celebrating 50 Years*  
**PRESERVING ♦ EDUCATING ♦ PERFORMING**



# WINDJAMMERS

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## WINDJAMMERS UNLIMITED HALL OF FAME

For bios on the Hall of Fame Laureates, go to [mywju.org](http://mywju.org) and Hall of Fame tab

1974	<b>Karl L. King</b>	1996	<b>Perry G. Lowery</b>
1974	<b>Merle Evans</b>	1997	<b>William Pruyn</b>
1975	<b>Fred Jewell</b>	1998	<b>Everette James</b>
1975	<b>Robert Hoe, Jr.</b>	1999	<b>Eddie Woekner</b>
1976	<b>Vic Robbins</b>	2000	<b>Robert D. Peckham*</b>
1976	<b>Henry Kyes</b>	2001	<b>Jack Bell</b>
1977	<b>A. Lee Hinckley</b>	2002	<b>Joe Browning</b>
1978	<b>Russell Alexander</b>	2003	<b>Joseph Gorton</b>
1979	<b>Ramon Escorcia</b>	2003	<b>Lewis Bader</b>
1980	<b>Charles E. Duple</b>	2004	<b>Carl Clair</b>
1981	<b>J.J. Richards</b>	2005	<b>Joseph A. Emidy</b>
1982	<b>Albert C. Sweet</b>	2005	<b>William Merrick</b>
1983	<b>Charles L. Barnhouse</b>	2006	<b>William Sweeney</b>
1984	<b>Walter P. English</b>	2006	<b>Ned Kendall</b>
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1986	<b>Paul Yoder</b>	2007	<b>Joe Stefan</b>
1987	<b>Earle M. Moss</b>	2008	<b>George Ganweiler</b>
1988	<b>Henry Fillmore</b>	2009	<b>Sverre O. Braathen</b>
1989	<b>Douglas D. MacLeod*</b>	2009	<b>Harry Crigler</b>
1990	<b>Ward Stauth*</b>	2010	<b>Carl "Pop" Neel</b>
1991	<b>Clinton "Johnnie" Evans</b>	2010	<b>Harvey Phillips</b>
1992	<b>James A. Perkins</b>	2011	<b>Charles L. Gebest</b>
1993	<b>Ray "Red" Floyd</b>	2012	<b>William Weldon</b>
1994	<b>L. Paul Luckey</b>	2012	<b>Mike Montgomery*</b>
1995	<b>Hale A. Vandercook</b>	2013	<b>Charles H. Bennett, Jr.*</b>

2013	<b>Robert P. Hills, Jr.*</b>
2014	<b>Charlie Stevenson</b>
2014	<b>Joe Basile</b>
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2017	<b>Keith Greene</b>
2017	<b>Paul Bierley</b>
2018	<b>Thomas G. Canham</b>
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2020	<b>James P. Wolfscale</b>

\* For service to Windjammers Unlimited

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2018	Arthur E. Stensvad* (WJU #2) WJU Co-Founder
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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**ENGFORD SHOWS Bass Drum**  
*Photo courtesy Circus World Museum*



**WINDJAMMERS UNLIMITED**  
*Celebrating our 50 Years*

### ANNUAL DUES

Dues for 2022 are to be paid after 10/1/2021 and before 12/31/2021.

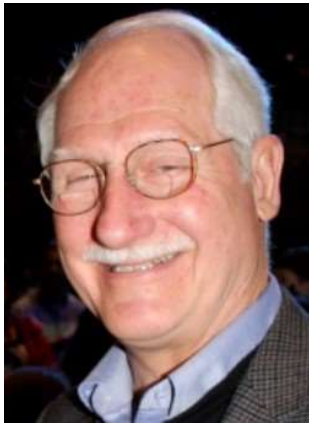
Your Board of Trustees decided at their July Board Meeting to increase the annual dues to \$50 for Individuals and \$60 for a family of two (same address). Students remain at \$20.

New members joining between 10/1/2021 and 1/31/2022 are offered a 50% discount on the 2022 Dues.

Pay online or via check to WJU Secretary.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Don Covington, President, WJU #119



My hat is off to the 50th Anniversary Team for another stellar event. The virtual summer meet contained something for everyone. There was an exploration of circus music history through live visits to the Ringling Museum and the circus collection at the Milner Library at Illinois State University, virtual individual performances by Windjammer musicians skillfully edited into a concert ensemble, a look at the July concert in Baraboo, Wisconsin by a Windjammers band led by Charlie Conrad, circus performances, and fascinating interviews. If you were not able to experience it all, look for details below on how you can view segments at your leisure.

At a recent meeting, the Board of Trustees examined our finances and made the difficult decision to increase annual dues for the first time in six years. Our expenses have increased while our membership numbers have decreased and we are seeing the effects of inflation across the board. Effective immediately, annual dues will be \$50 for individual members and \$60 for families. Dues for students will remain at \$20. One easy way to increase our income is to enroll additional members. All of us can do our part by encouraging fellow musicians to join us. As an incentive, new first-time members who join WJU between October 1, 2021 and January 31, 2022 will receive a 50% discount (Student memberships excepted). Why not sign up a friend and encourage them to come to Florida for our annual convention in January where we'll continue our 50th anniversary celebration by playing a selection of Windjammers' all-time favorite tunes.

Mark your calendar now. Plan to attend the 2022 convention in Bradenton, Florida from January 11-16 and the 2022 summer meet in Springfield, Missouri July 20-24, 2022. We're getting together in person at last and you won't want to miss out.

Don

## **MISSED THE 2021 VIRTUAL SUMMER MEET?**

Events are digital, so you can watch at your leisure. Go to [mywju.org](http://mywju.org) to register and pay the nominal participation fee of \$20. You will be emailed the Program Booklet which will contain the links to all eleven events described on the adjacent page.

## **AMAZON SMILE**

Purchasing via Amazon? Use Amazon Smile and WJU receives 0.5%. No cost to you.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7356228>

## **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)

## **WINDJAMMERS APPAREL**

Available with the 50<sup>th</sup> or standard logo  
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# WJU 2021 SUMMER MEET - A VIRTUAL EVENT

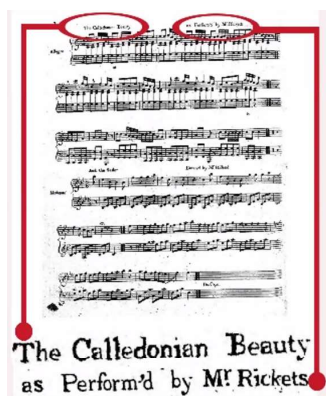
July 23-25, 2021

Similar to our 2021 Annual Convention in January, an “abundance of caution” relative to COVID-19 resulted in our Summer Meet also being delivered digitally to our members afternoons and evenings, Friday, July 23 through Sunday, July 25. The 50th Anniversary Planning Committee worked hard to deliver a worthy set of events. Special thanks go to **Andy Rawls** (WJU #3435) whose video recording and editing skills were critical to the majority of presentations.

Presenter photos and bios were included in the 20-page Program booklet available to Zoom attendees, who paid a nominal \$20 per household to participate.

Kicking off the weekend were two live events. The first had Ringling Museum curators **Heidi Connor** (Chief Archivist) and **Jennifer Lemmer Posey** (Tibbal's Curator of Circus) talking about the importance of music to the circus performance as reflected in the Museum's collections. Those collections also include 221 “home movies” filmed by Buster Bailey (WJU #17, dec.)

Next was **Maureen Brunsdale**, head of Special Collections at Illinois State University's Milner Library, providing an overview of their circus-music-related holdings. Included was what was likely the first piece of music heard in the John Bill Ricketts Circus in Philadelphia in 1793 -- *The Caledonian Beauty*.



**Sonja Barta** – a circus girl from Sheboygan, Wisconsin – talked about her time as a circus performer with her family's Seils-Sterling Circus, a show that toured the Midwestern United States from 1924 until 1938.

Closing out the Friday presentations was a wonderful recording of our **WJU Center Ring Concert** prior to the January 2018 Sailor Circus. Thanks to Andy Rawls for the multiple camera recordings and excellent editing of this performance.

Saturday's events kicked off with presentations by former Ringling-Barnum clowns, **Taylor Albin** and **Dean Kelley**. Then **Joe Colossa**, Ringling's Blue Unit trainmaster for 14 years, helped us “Ride the Ringling Rails” with his stories of what it takes to manage a moving “city” more than a mile in length. Next up was circus historian **Chris Berry** (WJU #3959) interviewing **Stasia Kelly**, daughter of the world's most famous clown, Emmett Kelly.

Saturday's presentations ended with the **Windjammers Unlimited Concert** performed just two weeks prior, in Baraboo, WI. This public concert, conducted by **Charles Conrad** (WJU #1525), was part of the Central States Circus Soirée hosted by **Timothy Noel Tegge** (WJU #2937). As a result of our providing a circus band, Windjammers Unlimited was credited as a co-sponsor. Again, thanks to Andy Rawls for being on site and recording this special post-pandemic concert of circus music. [See page 7 for more on this concert.]

Our Day Three schedule kicked off with a wonderful opportunity to see and hear **Merle Evans** talk about his life as Ringling's bandmaster and some of the circus music celebrities he had known. The source of this 45-minute “highlights” video, was a two-hour interview conducted by **Jay Kahn** (WJU #583) in 1985. Merle was 93 at the time and his memory for names and dates was truly amazing.

Merle Evans



Next up was a presentation by elephant trainer **Armando Loyal**. Recorded during the Circus Soirée, Armando provided us the opportunity to appreciate the care given to the pachyderms and their importance to circus performances.

Our virtual summer meet ended with an excellent video of **Circus World Museum's Big Top Show**, recorded by Andy Rawls two weeks prior. Thanks to the performers and CWM management for allowing us the opportunity to record and present this circus performance.

The Meet also included time for social interaction and interspersed throughout were several of our “virtual band” videos compiled by **Lynette Garlan** (WJU #3633).

Those attending felt the “circus spirit” and tapped toes to the circus music. Hopefully, however, all future Meets and Annual Conventions will be in person and filled with live music!

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



# ENGFORD AIR CALLIOPE - Front Cover Comments

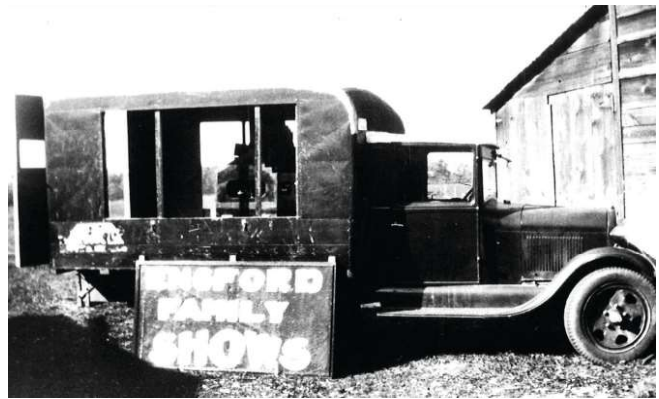
By Circus World Museum Staff



**COVER PHOTO: ENGFORD FAMILY SHOWS AIR CALLIOPE**

Longtime vaudeville performers Robert and Amanda Engford decided to put out a truck show in the 1920s. They based their motorized circus out of central Wisconsin and catered to smaller communities not visited by the large railroad shows.

The family built a body on a 1921 Model T Ford to carry the show's air calliope, and both the Engford Family Show and the Forges Bros. used the calliope truck during the 1920s and 1930s.



**HARRY ENGFORD'S DONATION TO CIRCUS WORLD**

In 1965, Harry Engford, son of the show's founders and also a performer in the show, donated the calliope truck's original chassis and motor to Circus World Museum. The museum then fabricated a new body and got the truck running again.

Throughout the years since its restoration, the Engford calliope truck accompanied performances and entertained audiences in the daily street parade at Circus World Museum.



**ROBERT, AMANDA, HARRY & FLORENCE ENGFORD**

In May, 1923, Robert and Amanda Engford bought the Engford Family Home, now known as "Circus House" in Plover, WI. Centrally located in Wisconsin, it became the headquarters for one of the first motorized circuses to operate in Wisconsin. Harry studied music under Professor Wzalkovich, playing accordion and violin. He and his sister also performed a musical variety show for local events held during the winter season.



# WJU at CENTRAL STATES CIRCUS SOIRÉE - Back Cover Comments

Timothy Tegge (WJU #2937) Host; Charles Conrad (WJU #1525) Conductor

Photos by Jeff Weiland



**Timothy Noel Tegge** hosted his second annual Circus Soirée July 9-11, 2021 in Baraboo, WI and invited Windjammers Unlimited to be a co-sponsor of the event via providing a concert of circus music Saturday at 3 p.m.

A significant number of WJU members opted to participate and the concert was much appreciated by the dedicated circus fans attending the Circus Soirée and others who joined to hear the concert. A number of Soirée events were recorded by Andy Rawls (WJU #3435) for broadcast as part of our virtual summer meet July 23-25 (see page 5).

**WJU participants were:** (conductor) Charles Conrad; (piccolo) Chris Griffith; (clarinets) Malinda Rawls, Henry Arkin, Ellen Weiland, Carol Gilmour, Jim Rumbaugh, Susan Shearin, Wayne Kasprzak; (saxophone) Linda Kasprzak, (trumpets) John Wetzell, Jim Cross, Linda Zeimann, Roger Blackburn, Linda Belar, Valery Welch, Rosemarie Cline (also with IWS); (trombones) Joe Shearin, Bill Albrecht, Bob Knowler, Allen Lawless; (euphoniums) Lynette Garlan, George Hardwidge, John Griffith, Harry Tyrer; (tubas) Horst Geyer, Bob Wig; (drumset) Steve Liljegren; and (audio/video) Andy Rawls.

In addition, the band included the following **Indiana Wind Symphony** members, who we hope will join Windjammers Unlimited as a result of their participation with us: (clarinets) Jim DeCaro, Nick Brightman; (alto Saxophone) Cheri Brightman; (tenor Saxophone) Bob Burns; (bass clarinet) Flora Garrison; and (tuba) Alan Davis.



## July 10, 2021 CONCERT PLAYLIST

*Ringling Brothers Grand Entry* (1911) Al Sweet (1876-1945)  
*Barnum's Circus Galop* (1885) Fred G. Binns  
*Rob't. Stickney's 6-Horse Galop* (1886) George Southwell  
*Light Cavalry Overture* (1866) Suppe, arr. Henry Fillmore  
*Burr's Triumphal March* (1897) Russell Alexander  
*Lassus Trombone* (1915) Henry Fillmore (1881-1956)  
*Across the Atlantic* (1897) Russell Alexander (1977-1915)  
*Entry of the Gladiators* (1897) Julius Fucik (1872-1916)  
*Sweeney's Cavalcade March* (1902) W. Paris Chambers  
*Gollmar Brothers' Triumphal* (1914) Fred K. Huffer  
*The Crimson Petal* (1901) Fred Jewell (1975-1936)  
*Prince of Decorah* (1905) P. G. Lowery (1871-1942)  
*The Carnival Queen* (1902) Fred Jewell (1875-1936)  
*Robinson's Grand Entree* (1911) Karl L. King (1891-1971)  
*Sounds from the Harem* (1920) C. E. Duble (1884-1960)  
*The Trooper* (1904) Fred K. Huffer (1879-1943)  
*Barnum & Bailey's Favorite* (1913) Karl L. King (1891-1971)



# WINDJAMMERS HALL OF FAME

## Jack Bell (1898-1972), 2001 Inductee

By Rod Everhart, WJU #1351



**101 RANCH WILD WEST "COWBOY BAND" LEADER JACK BELL WITH ARENA DIRECTOR, GEORGE L. MYERS.** *(bucklesblog photo)*

Circus bandmaster Jack Bell was born John W. Bell at Coalgate, Oklahoma on September 25, 1898. Back then Coalgate was considered as "Indian Territory" (Choctaw Nation) and the 1900 Federal Census reflected his birth location as such. His parents, John Temple and Sara Ann (Patterson) Bell were both born in England. Jack had an older brother George R (1895), and younger siblings Joseph Daniel (1903), Elizabeth J. (1908) and Thomas (1910).

Jack's grandfather, Ridley Bell, was a coal miner in Coalgate and the 1900 Federal Census reflected that occupation. In 1901, however, he moved to Pittsburg, KS and then subsequently to Lafayette Co., Missouri. Ridley then encouraged the rest of the family to join him and his wife, Margaret, in Missouri.

So, while still a toddler, Jack's family moved 400 miles north to Lexington, Lafayette County, Missouri, east of

Kansas City. At the age of 12, he quit school after finishing fifth grade and went to work in the coal mine where his grandfather worked. Apparently, he found that not as much fun as he expected, so left to deliver meat for a local Lexington market. That was not fun either, so he returned to the mines. However, prior to his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday he decided to enlist in the U.S. Army. But because of a mistake, he found himself in the Missouri National Guard instead. When the Guard discovered the error, he was discharged because of not yet being 18. When he did reach that age, he again attempted to enlist in the Army, this time successfully.

Initially, Jack was stationed in Arizona and then Arkansas. He was sent to France at the outbreak of World War I. He served there as a Sergeant Bugler as well as delivering messages to the front line. When the War ended in 1918, Jack re-enlisted in the Army and became a member of General Pershing's band. That band was the forerunner of the U.S. Army Band and provided ceremonial music for the General's headquarters. During this time in Europe, he had the opportunity to have lessons from the trumpet professor at the Brussels Conservatory in Brussels. In 1920, he was back at the Army's Camp Pike in Arkansas with the Federal Census that year listing his occupation as U.S. Army Bugler.

After his discharge from the U.S. Army, Jack was briefly back in Lexington, Missouri. With his trumpet skills, Jack then began his association with circus bands. Over the following few years, he was with the **Mighty Haag Show, Robbins Brothers Circus, and Lee Brothers Circus**. While with Mighty Haag, rumor has it that the young drummer boy, Harry Haag James, son of bandmaster Everette James (WJU Hall of Fame 1998), would ask Jack for help in playing the trumpet. *[See SEP-OCT 2019 Circus Fanfare for Hall of Fame feature on Everette James and his son, Harry James.]*

Jack was with the **Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West** during the 1929 season. Homer Lee was bandmaster at that time. When Homer left the show in Greencastle, Pennsylvania, Jack took on the bandmaster role. That band included four trumpets, three clarinets, two trombones, a baritone, two basses, a snare drum, a bass drum, and a calliope. The 1929 Route Book for Miller Bros. included these kind comments: *"Jack Bell (now altogether – three cheers) picked up the director's baton and proceeded to distinguish himself. His sudden rise to fame would make good material for a Horatio Alger novel that could be entitled 'From Trumpet*



*Player to Director, or Tooting His Way to Fame.”*

The 1930 Federal Census reflected Jack's location as Perry, Oklahoma, and listed his occupation as "Musician in Circus Band." On March 1, 1930, Jack married Dorothy Marshall. He was 31 and she was 20.

Jack stayed with 101 Ranch Wild West until it closed. During this

time, he and Dorothy divorced and on December 4, 1933 he married Ruth Lee Davis. For the 1934 Season he was with **Gorman Brothers Circus**. We do not know who he was with the next few years, but during that time he and Ruth divorced, circus life being quite hard on marriages.

From 1938 through 1941, Jack was with **Polack Brothers Circus**, having replaced Charles Redrick as bandmaster during the 1938 Season. While with Polack, he met Lillian E. (Wahmhoff) Burgess Monesmith, an equestrienne on the show. They were married April 22, 1940. Their daughter, Sarah Ann (Sally), was born March 14, 1941 in Chicago, Illinois.

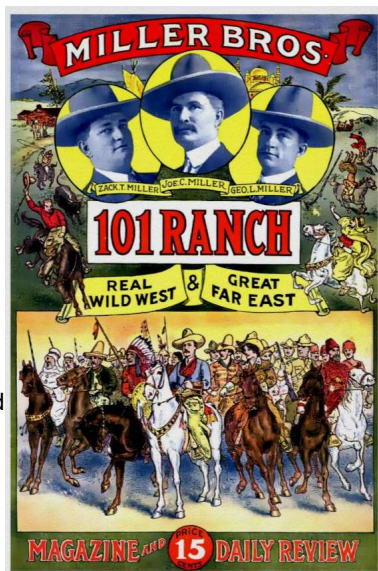
With Chicago now his "home base", and a daughter to look after, Jack Bell left the sawdust world at the end of the 1941 Season. Initially he worked for the Graver Tank & Manufacturing Company in the Chicago area, and then joined the M & M Tank Company as a plant foreman. He performed well and they subsequently transferred him to their plant in California.

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

SERIAL NUMBER T. 274	1. NAME (Print) John W. Bell			ORDER NUMBER T. 10,584
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 10060 Ave. L Chicago Cook Illinois				
3. MAILING ADDRESS Same				
4. TELEPHONE None	5. AGE IN YEARS 44	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Colgate		
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Lillian Bell (wife)				
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Graver Tank and Manufacturing Co.				
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Graver Tank and Manufacturing Co. East Chicago, Ind.				
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE. John W. Bell.				

D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 1-1-42) (over) ☆ GPO 16-21039-2

WWII REGISTRATION WITH BIRTHPLACE INCORRECTLY SPELLED.



In 1944, when it was decided to have a **Golden Jubilee Celebration** of the original Miller Brothers 101 Ranch and Wild West show, the 101 Ranch Cowboy Band was once again under the direction of Jack Bell.

The Jubilee event and concert were held at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum on July 21-22, 1944. Colonel Zack T. Miller, the last remaining Miller brother, was among those celebrated. Years later, Lillian Bell reminisced about sitting in that Coliseum before show day, helping Jack sort out the music scores from the trunk containing his "collection." For this event, the circus band was comprised of top-notch Hollywood studio musicians. Opening night saw many movie stars in the audience with Lillian and Jack's mother sitting behind Robert Taylor and Barbara Stanwyck.

Perhaps not a surprise, sawdust fever hit Jack Bell once more. He toured as bandleader with the **C.R. Montgomery Wild West** until the show closed in 1947. Jack was the bandmaster for **King Brothers Circus** in 1948 with a seven-person band.

Then in 1949, Jack was with **Biller Brothers Circus** as its bandleader.

He had 12 musicians in that band. That roster included Jack as bandmaster/trumpet, Carmen Petraca and Karl Wahmund on trumpet, Lewis Shaw and Jack Campbell on trombone, baritone Felice Gambone, tubist Alfred De Pascates, Homer Clark on clarinet, Benny Kenner on clarinet & sax, Frank Thompson on snare and John Apollo on bass drum. An unnamed additional trumpet player joined after the roster was published. In addition, Betty Biller (for whom the circus was named) was on the roster as a soloist and Louis Jordan was listed for the calliope. The calliope was not technically part of the band, but rather was mounted on a small trailer and used for ballyhoo in town and on the Midway.



BILLER BROS. CALLIOPE, PLAYED BY LOUIS JORDAN





**BANDMASTER JACK BELL IN 1949 WITH HIS BILLER BROS. CIRCUS BAND.** *Photo from the Collection of Max Kramer Goodall II (WJU #1060)*

The next year, Jack was with **Ward Brothers Circus**, a show that played indoors and in parks under the Shrine label. On July 4th, 1950, the Ward show played the Los Angeles Coliseum on behalf of the American Legion. Over 110,000 attended those performances. For that event, similar to the one there in 1944, the circus band was augmented with 35 of Hollywood's finest musicians. That show's "Road Band" included Bill Pruyn (WJU #914 and 1997 WJU Hall of Fame) on Solo Cornet. Bill, who later served as bandleader of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, praised Jack as a brilliant cornetist, conductor, and gentleman. Bill added that his personal subsequent success as a show trumpet player and bandleader was due to Bell's tutelage.

Jack Bell's final circus gig was with **Cole & Walters**. Perhaps ironically, they opened March 23, 1951 in Jack Bell's birthplace – Coalgate, Oklahoma. Jack, and his brother George, had the concessions and Jack was fronting the 5-person band, promoted as "The Best Little Band on the Road." For the 1951 season, the show toured Oklahoma, Kansas, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa before working their way through Missouri and Arkansas to close November 1 at Haskell, OK. Winter quarters was at the Choctaw County Fairgrounds in Hugo, OK. Jack continued as the bandleader for Cole & Walters through the 1953 Season.

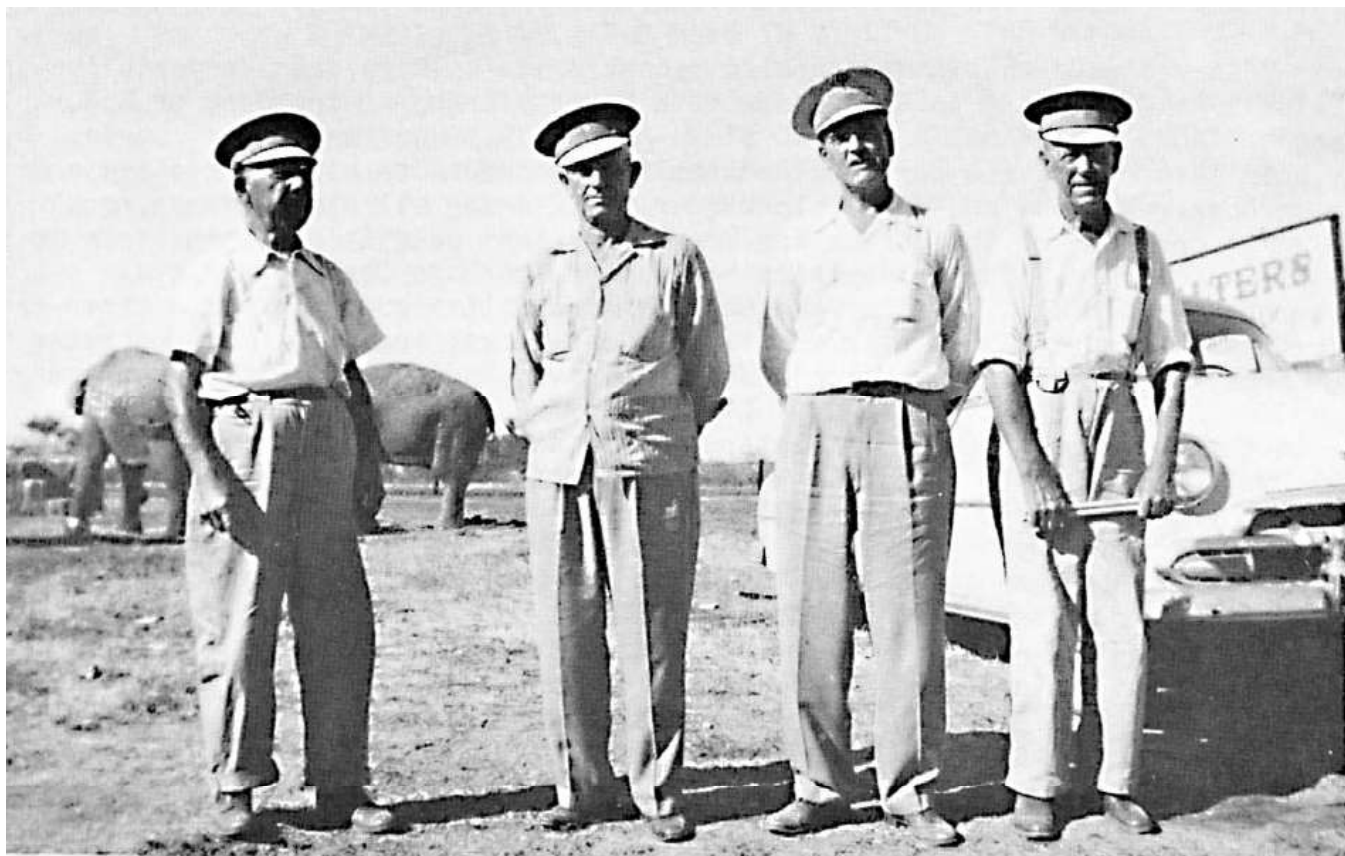
Unfortunately, in May 1954, Jack underwent major surgery that left him unable to continue in show business. So, for the second and final time he retired from the sawdust world.

In August 1954, Jack and Lillian moved to Seattle, Washington where they could be close to her family. There, he operated a doughnut franchise until his death on November 23, 1972 at age 74. He is buried in Brier, Washington, along with Lillian, who died years later on January 4, 1996.



**John W. "Jack" Bell was recognized by Windjammers Unlimited as its 31<sup>st</sup> Hall of Fame laureate at the annual Convention in Sarasota, FL in January, 2001.**





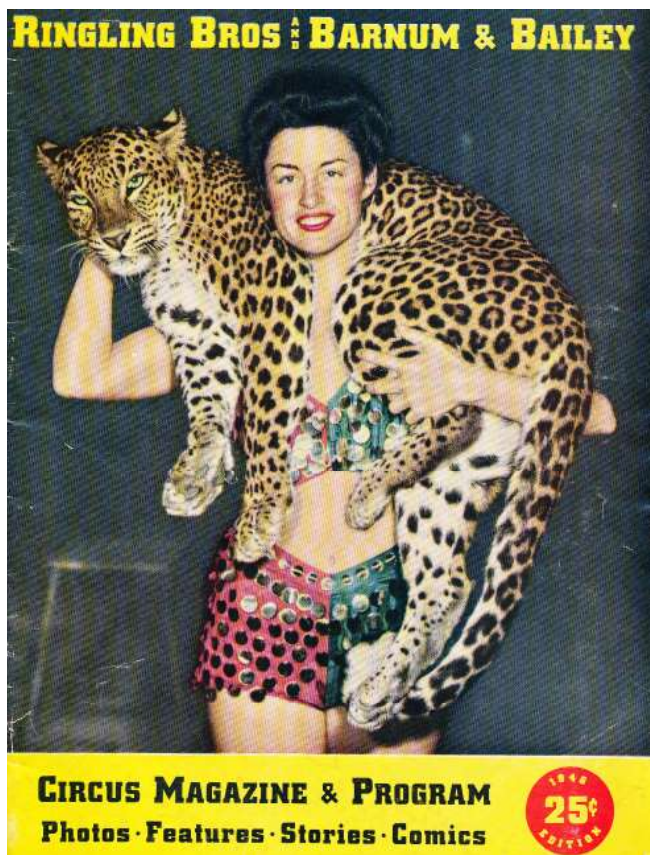
**COLE and WALTERS CIRCUS** on the road, appearing in Beaver City, Nebraska on September 6th, 1953. In the photo are Paul Squeally-bass, George Bell-trumpet, Bandleader Jack Bell-trumpet, and Ross Essex-drums.



**COLE and WALTERS CIRCUS Bandstand Wagon.** This trailer No. 26 would be backed into the tent beside the back door. The tail gate folded down to become the bandstand. The "Favorite Show of the West" banner would be visible during the show above the band members' heads. Permanently installed inside the bandstand wagon was a Hammond Organ. The ring curbs and props were stored in the front section.

# 1946 FITCH BANDWAGON BROADCAST

By Eric Beheim, WJU #66



In previous issues, we discussed the appearances made by Merle Evans and the Ringling-Barnum band 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 circus' evening performance.

The Ringling band's first appearance on this program, which had occurred in 1941, resulted in the heaviest telephone and fan mail response that the program had ever received. Thereafter, its annual appearances each Spring were among **The Fitch Bandwagon's** most anticipated and best-remembered programs. (See "Circus Recording History: Here Comes the Fitch Bandwagon" in the April 2008 issue of *Circus Fanfare*, available to WJU members on our website at mywju.org)

Audio from the Ringling band's 1943, 1944 and 1945 **Fitch Bandwagon** appearances are posted on the website under the **Preservation - Circus Music** tab. Now, you can go there as well to hear the 1946 recordings.

The band returned for one final appearance in 1946. A 16-inch transcription disk with a mostly complete version of this broadcast was made by the late Ted Deppish, and ultimately was passed along to Don Covington (WJU #119) who had me make a digital copy of it for the Circus World Museum in

2014. According to Jerry Haendiges, one of the country's leading authorities on old time radio shows, no other copies of this particular broadcast are known to exist.

By 1946, the **Fitch Bandwagon** format had changed dramatically. Initially, it was a weekly showcase for the nation's big bands such as Glenn Miller, Freddy Martin, Harry James, Tommy Dorsey, etc. But in 1946 the program included comedy skits and standup routines in addition to the music provided by the guest bands. That fall, it became a full-fledged situation comedy starring bandleader Phil Harris and his wife Alice Faye.

In a departure from the past, the Ringling band's 1946 broadcast took place in a radio studio rather than at the Madison Square Garden arena. In previous years, the audience had consisted of the children of U.S. military personnel whom the Fitch Company had invited to attend and who had then remained in their seats to see the circus performance that followed. In 1946, the studio audience consisted of about a thousand orphans "of every color and creed" from the New York City area.

Serving as the program's host that evening was Toby Reed, who had previously hosted the band's 1943 appearance. (At one point, Merle Evans confuses him with Jack Costello who had hosted the 1945 broadcast.) In addition to Evans, Ringling's Director of Radio Publicity F. Beverly Kelley was on hand to add a touch of circus ballyhoo to the proceedings.

The opening number was Karl L. King's *Alhambra Grotto*, a number that does not appear on any of the Ringling band's commercial recordings. During the broadcast, several other seldom-heard numbers were also played. At one point, Evans assists Reed when he delivers a Fitch Shampoo commercial in the style of an old-time circus pitch man.

Accompanied by *Broadway One-Step*, a contingent of some of Ringling's best-known clowns make an appearance to the obvious delight of the children. During this sequence Toby Reed conducts brief interviews with such famous clowns as Felix Adler, Paul Jerome, Paul Jung, and Milt Taylor, thus preserving their voices for posterity. Next, Toby Reed and Bev Kelley kid Merle Evans about his nickname "Aba Daba" which he earned because of his fondness for fancy desserts. ("Aba Daba" is circus slang for dessert.) Accompanied by the band, Kelley then sings an original song dedicated to Merle Evans and titled *Aba Daba*. (This is **not** the famous Fields/Donovan comic song *Aba Daba Honeymoon*.)

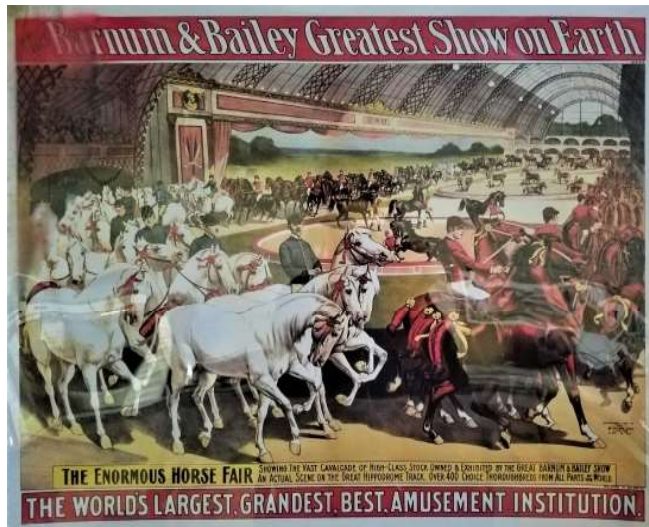
The band concludes by playing Karl L. King's *The Big Cage Galop* which has to be cut short in order to fit in the program's closing announcements.



# KARL KING's CIRCUS DAYS - part 2, 1917-1918

By Nancy Olson, WJU #1905

The following is 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. The Part 1 article was in the July/August 2021 issue of *Circus Fanfare*.



The Barnum & Bailey Circus in 1916 generally had contracts with the performers, musicians and staff, signed by John Ringling. The Ringlings had owned B&B since 1907. Tiny Kline performed the Iron Jaw act and later in life was the first Tinker Bell at Disneyland. She wrote about her days with B&B that year, illuminating life for show folks in the circus:

1. *The size of your trunk will be a regulation 26" Taylor trunk. Be sure to have a zinc re-enforced bottom to keep the water out.*
2. *Bandmen had a top of their own. Three uniforms for each bandman.*
3. *The first two weeks salary was withheld till two weeks ended.*
4. *During the 5 weeks at Madison Square Garden every member footed his own expenses. Once on the train, it was all on the show.*
5. *Romances on the show were taboo. Romeos and Juliets who might think to evade the moral rules would affect the integrity of the show.*
6. *Late for a performance ONCE would be tolerated, but late TWICE and you were fired.*

Ruth Lovett had worked since age 16 at Powell's Music Store in Canton, Ohio, playing and singing sheet music sold in the store. Karl King was known to stop by the music store to "try out" a new composition on the store's piano. It

was not long before Karl and Ruth were keeping "steady company". Her voice teacher, Ray Clewell, (**SIR GALAHAD MARCH**, 1917, dedicated to Ray Clewell) was courting Martha, the daughter of the music store owner. Martha and Ruth were friends, so the two couples double-dated. By the time Karl had left for the 1916 Sells Floto show, he had Ruth sized for an engagement ring. However, Ruth's parents were not exactly thrilled to have their daughter associated with a wandering circus life, so Karl reached an agreement with her parents -- Karl would find a more sedentary life following the 1916 season.

Karl King once told a story regarding John Ringling. Mr. John and Karl King were standing together near the main gate when an employee drove up to the gate in an expensive cab. He got out, was handsomely dressed, and he paid his fare with a 20 dollar bill, telling the driver to "Keep the change." Ringling said nothing until the man walked by. Mr. John said "You're fired." The worker asked "What in the world have I done?" Mr. John replied, "I don't know, but it must have been something because nobody can afford a life like that on your salary". It was known Mr. John kept a close watch on the circus financial situation and he knew to a penny what each of his employees was paid.



Karl and Ruth King

The Sells Floto show played in Canton in June 1916. King had written Ruth urging her to get off work and come see the show. This will be your "last chance to see me lead a circus band". Ruth came to the show and as she entered the Big Top, King broke off the music the band was playing, and launched into "*Along Came Ruth*", a popular Irving Berlin tune of the day. The lyrics included "*When along came Ruth, and to tell the truth, She stole my heart away.*"

Karl and Ruth married November 17, 1916. At that point in his career Karl King had reached considerable fame. Not yet 25 years old, he had 150 compositions to his name.

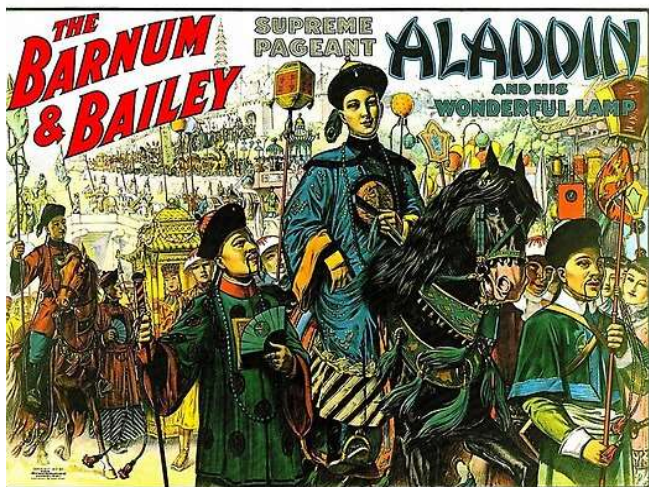
Shortly after their marriage, Karl and Ruth attended Karl's favorite opera in Cleveland, Puccini's *MADAM BUTTERFLY*, with Japanese soprano Tomaki Miura. She performed *Madam Butterfly* 2,000 times all over the world. King's love of opera was evident in his home where he had 78 records with titles of opera music and musicals.

On April 6, 1917, the United States of America joined its Allies – Britain, France, Russia – in World War 1. Thousands of men were called into service. Ned Brill, bandmaster for Barnum & Bailey's, was without a band and the opening date at Madison Square Garden was only two weeks away.

The Barnum & Bailey Circus had been owned by Ringling Bros. since 1907, but they operated it as a separate unit. Desperate for a circus band, John Ringling contacted Karl King urging him to take over as bandmaster. Karl King took Mr. John's letter to Mr. & Mrs. Lovett. Recognizing the opportunity to lead the greatest circus band in the country, the Lovetts gave their consent. Thus began a "two-year honeymoon", taking Karl and Ruth to many states in the nation, as he literally became Barnum & Bailey's Favorite.

King provided John Ringling with a 33-piece band. Ruth played the air calliope, a fairly new instrument, lighter in weight than the steam calliope. At Madison Square Garden, King viewed the acts in rehearsal, assembled the book for the windjammers who would experience some 200 or more changes in music during the two-hour show.

The big show featured **ALADDIN AND HIS WONDERFUL LAMP** – folk tale literature – cradled in mythology and mysticism of the East. The band's director was Karl L. King with Karl Frangkiser as assistant director. Records reveal that in 1917 Barnum & Bailey's Circus and Ringling Bros. Circus each had 1,000 personnel, 335 horses, a menagerie that included 26 elephants and 16 camels, and travelled in 92 rail cars.



The show included a Chinese troupe – often hanging by their hair. The act inspired King to compose **UNG-KUNG-FOY-YAH**.



Some of the big name acts to inspire King compositions would be Clyde Beatty, animal trainer – **THE BIG CAGE**, and Lillian Leitzel -- **IN OLD PORTUGAL**. Leitzel said "it gave me wings." Leitzel was from Germany and had been trained as a pianist. She was the only performer to have her own rail car and in it, a grand piano. She was the toast of the circus world. The audience would count her one-armed planges on the Roman Rings...up to 249 is recorded.

And many more compositions were inspired by the acts...not to forget **SARASOTA** dedicated to John Ringling, and **THE GOLDEN DRAGON** dedicated to Charles Kanally. And the list goes on....

The Center Ring Concert repertoire list for 1917 had 7 King compositions and increased to 18 in 1918 along with operatic overtures. The assistant director was J. Richard Kultti and King dedicated **PERSIAN MOONLIGHT** to Kultti.



On July 26, 1917, the **TWO HEMISPHERE BANDWAGON** once again led the circus down the streets of Fort Dodge, IA, but this time with Karl King as bandmaster and Ruth King, last in the parade, playing the air calliope.

Because of World War 1, the draft was a concern for King. He had hopes that John Philip Sousa, Lt. Commander of the Navy Band at the Great Lakes Naval Station, would have



him as a musician or as an assistant conductor. Sousa had all the assistants he needed but knew of an open position at Camp Grant in Illinois.

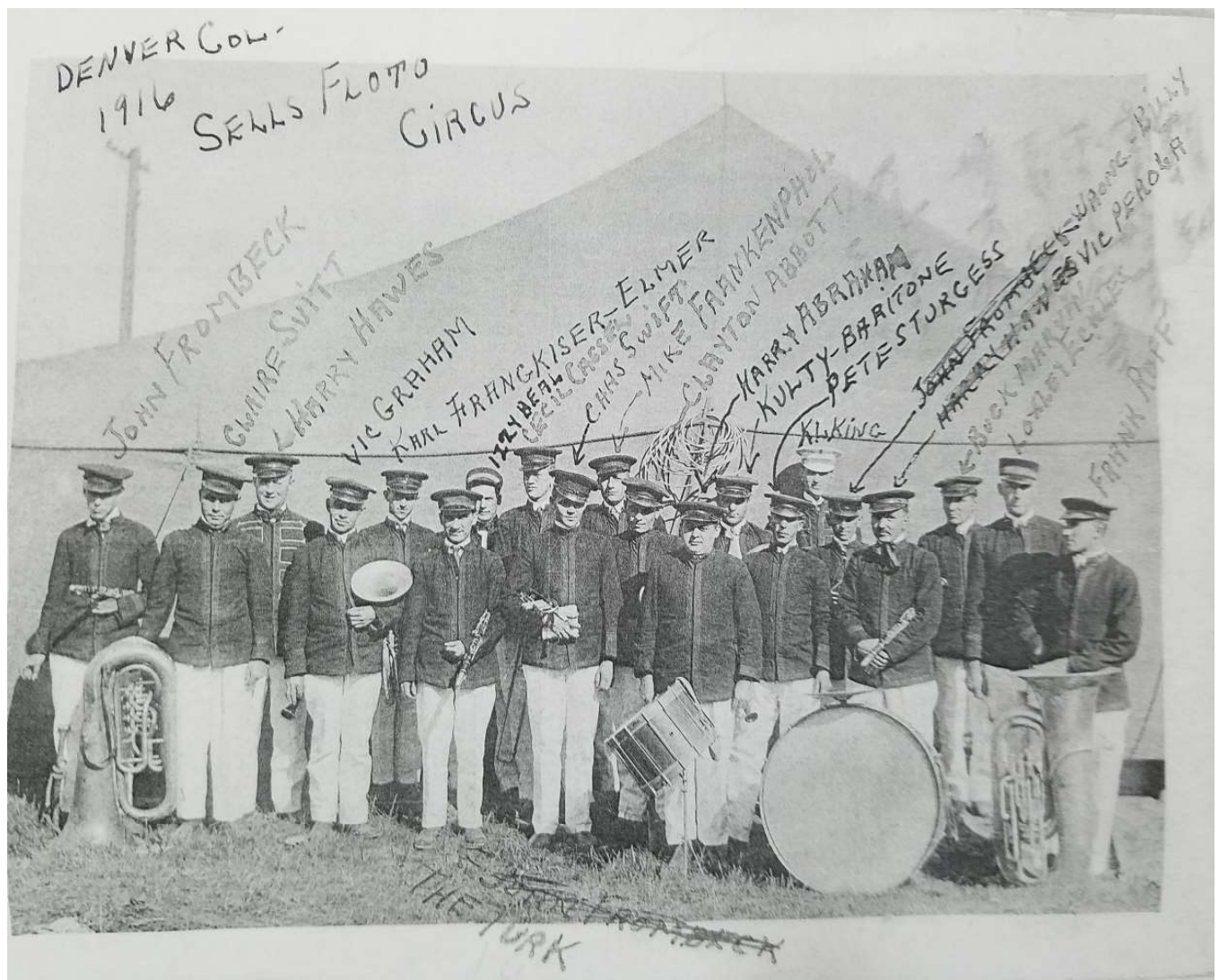
Sousa wrote King "I am sending you a letter to an officer in the bands at Camp Grant, Ill with a request that he enter into correspondence with you." The day before this message arrived, however, King had received a telegram from Lt. Maxson F. Judelt which read, "Can you come to Camp Grant as bandmaster? You would be commissioned." King had his physical exams and packed his bags for Camp Grant. His reporting date though was November 11, 1918, the very date the Armistice was signed.

In the Karl King archives there is a letter of recommendation from John Ringling on gold leaf stationery. It reads:

*TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN -- Mr. K.L. King has been in the employ of Barnum & Bailey for a number of years in the capacity as Bandmaster, during which time he has filled the position in a first class and artistic manner. Mr. King is a thorough musician, a composer of exceptional ability, and in handling the men under his charge is second to none. He is particularly fitted for this line of work.*

At the end of the 1918 season, Winter Quarters for Karl and Ruth King was Canton, Ohio, where he directed the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) band.

In the fall of 1920, troopers Karl and Ruth answered FIRST CALL to Fort Dodge, IA for another chapter in their lives and leaving the sawdust world behind, but definitely not forgotten.



**Musicians comprising the Sells-Floto Circus Band in 1916 under the direction of bandmaster Karl L. King**

Left to Right: John Frombeck, Claire Suitt, Harry Hawes, Vic Graham, Carl Frangkiser, The Turk, Izzy Beal, Cecil Casseu, Charles Swift, Mike Frankenphol, Clayton Abbott, Harry Abraham, Kulty (Baritone), Pete Sturgess, Karl King (white hat), Billy, Vic Perola, Buck Mavin, Loxley Eckles, Frank Roff

# Carl Frangkiser and the Unity Band

Recollections submitted by Ken Matson, WJU #3298, and reprinted from *Circus Fanfare* 2010-03; also, see photo on page 15.

I've always been a fan of the circus and its music. During the mid to late 1940s, my dad took me to the circus twice a year in Kansas City, always on a Friday evening — the Shrine Circus in November, and the Police Circus in March. All I remember about the director of the circus band was that he was referred to as Mr. 5×5 [Joe Basile]. During 1948 on Monday evenings, I began to listen to the Cities Service Band of America conducted by Paul Lavalle. It was during this time that I fell in love with the low brass sound, and my parents allowed me to take up the trombone. I started playing in the Unity Band around 1954 under Carl Frangkiser. I continued to play in the band until my marriage in 1962 and my new job took me to Florida as a mathematician for the Dept. of the Navy.



Dr. Carl Frangkiser in rehearsal, Dec. 1956 (Ken Matson Photos)

Carl Frangkiser's band rehearsed and performed at the Unity School of Christianity in Lee's Summit, Missouri. During intermission of the summer concerts, the Unity School of Christianity viewpoint was presented by one of their ministers.

We would rehearse on Thursday evenings in the tower in a room barely big enough for an 80-piece band. Some

nights we were a mighty warm crowd of musicians. During June, July, and August we would play outdoor concerts in an amphitheatre on the Unity grounds. Usually, there was a mixed quartet that sang with the band on the show tune numbers. About twice each summer, Keith House, then band director at Lee's Summit High School, would play a cornet solo.

Another fellow trombone in the band that I got to know was Charles Himmler. He was in Lawrence Welk's first dance orchestra in North Dakota. During the summer, if there were more than two trombones per part, Carl would move me to another section of the band to play the missing part on my trombone — alto sax, euphonium, or bassoon. One summer evening concert, I was seated directly under his baton playing the bassoon parts. He later told me he had a tape recorder and in the playback he heard my low notes sounding good.

During the non-summer months, we rehearsed for one and a half hours. All we did was sight-read band music. I don't remember playing the same music twice in a given year. Frangkiser must have had a very large library of circus type music. It was a great experience.

As a member of the Unity Band, there were some perks. You could play on their golf course and swim in their pool without charge. In the summer, I remember swimming in the pool on Sunday afternoon, and then playing the outdoor concert that evening.

Until years later, I did not realize what I had at the time. To have played under a band director who played cornet with **Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show** and the **Barnum & Bailey Circus Band**, both directed by Karl King, is quite extraordinary.

## Additional facts from Heritage Encyclopedia of Band Music

Carl Moerz Frangkiser (1894–1967), whose music was composed under his own name and over 36 pseudonyms, was born in Loudonville, Ohio, on September 18, 1894, the son of Edward and Anna Moerz Frangkiser. He attended Loudonville public schools, and his early music training was received from his father, a French horn player. He received his higher education at the Capitol College of Oratory and Music, a small private school in Columbus, Ohio [not to be confused with Capital University, of the same city]. From Capitol, he received a Bachelor of Music degree in 1915, a Master of Music degree in 1936, and an honorary doctorate (Mus.D.) in 1948. In his late teens, prior to his enrollment in Columbus, he apparently took summer courses offered by Capitol at Lakeside, Ohio [a Methodist Chautauqua institute], also playing band concerts there.



He played cornet with the **Sells Floto and Buffalo Bill Combined Shows (1914–1915)**, with the **Sells Floto Circus (1916)**, and with the **Barnum & Bailey Circus (1917)**.

**With Sells Floto and Barnum & Bailey, he was under the direction of Karl L. King. With Barnum & Bailey, he was solo cornetist and assistant director.**  
[See 1916 Sells Floto Circus Band photo on Page 15.]

During World War I, he served in the U.S. Army. He received a commission from the American Band School in Chaumont, France, and then led the 3rd Corps Band of the 308th Engineers in Germany.

He returned to the United States in 1919. In 1926, after working with various theater orchestras for seven years, he moved to Kansas City, Missouri. There he led the Kansas City Pinto Pony Band. For 40 years, beginning in 1927, he was director of music and music editor of the Unity School of Christianity at Unity Village in Lee's Summit, Missouri.

The Unity Band began as a small school band of 15 members but gradually grew to 100 members by admitting community musicians, some of whom were professionals.

Frangkiser died in Kansas City on January 19, 1967, was cremated, and interred at Summit Gardens in Lee's Summit. He was a very prolific composer, and most of his music was of the school music grade.



**Carl Frangkiser, before a summer Unity Band concert in 1958.**

#### **Carl's Known Pseudonyms:**

Philip Akron	Stuart Allen
G.S. Arberine	W.C. Collins
Arthur S. Darman	Paul Deniston
Walter Desmond	C. Elsen
J. Evans	James Farrell
Larry Fenshaw	Austin Gilbert
Ernesto Goldrin	Arthur Graham
Walter Graham	Teddy Holland
George S. King	Raymond Klay
Chester Leoni	Luther Lorenz
Bernard Loss	Howard Manton
David Marlowe	Eric Noble
Frederick North	Walter Payne
A.J. Perry	Edward Rayner
Edward Raynor	Leonard Safroni
M. Sanford	M. Seldon
Arthur Severn	John Muir Sills
T.R. Stevens	W. Tuffilli
Henry Walton	L.W. Weldon
Diane Williams	M. Williams
Lolita Young	

In addition to the pseudonyms listed above, Carl Frangkiser used the name A. Chandler, but this was not used for band works. There is evidence to suggest that the use of many of the pseudonyms was suggested by one of his publishers. As might be expected, using so many pseudonyms resulted in much confusion. One complication arose on the use of the name Arthur Graham as a Frangkiser pseudonym on *Sorority Sue*. There actually was a composer by that name, writing for the same publisher, and the publisher subsequently acknowledged the duplication.

## **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 \$20 for Student members, \$50 for Individuals, and \$60 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.

# Bozo's Merry-Go-Round Music

By Eric Beheim WJU #66



If other circus fans are like me, then it's probably safe to assume that many of them are also fans of amusement parks and carousels. And it's probably also safe to assume that many fans of traditional circus music also enjoy listening to band organs playing what many people consider to be the "happiest music on earth."

I grew up on the west side of Cleveland, Ohio, not far from Puritas Springs Park, an old-time amusement park that dated back to the early 1900s. Puritas Springs was where, at an early age, I was first exposed to band organ music. The first time I heard *Barnum and Bailey's Favorite*, it was being played by the Puritas Springs Park carousel's band organ. (That carousel is now operating at Six Flags Over St. Louis in Eureka, Mo.)

Back in the early 1950s there were no commercial recordings of band organ music, other than some special pressings intended for use by amusement parks and carousel owners. Then, around 1954, Capitol Records released a Bozo the Clown "single" titled **Bozo's Merry-Go-Round Music**, and which had two authentic band organ selections. Each side opened with a few bars of Billy May's *Bozo's Theme Song*, followed by a brief spoken introduction by Bozo himself, inviting young listeners to take a ride on his "merry merry-go-round." Bozo's voice was provided by Vance DeBar "Pinto" Colvig (1892-1967) who had been voicing Bozo since the very first Bozo records in 1946. Colvig was also the original voice for Disney's Goofy.

The ride itself started with Bozo ringing a bell (a practice actually used by many amusement parks.) Then came a complete band organ selection. Side A was *Our Director March* by Frederick Ellsworth Bigelow and Side B was



*Ciribiribin Waltz* by A. Pestalozzo. After the ride ended, Bozo returned for a few closing remarks.

I first heard **Bozo's Merry-Go-Round Music** on the radio shortly after it came out. Later, I received my very own copy as a reward for undergoing a trip to the dentist to have a bothersome tooth extracted. I was about 8 years old at the time. I'm afraid I must have driven my parents crazy by playing that record over and over again. However, *Ciribiribin* was one of my mother's favorite waltzes, and *Our Director March* had been the fight song of the high school they'd both attended.

My record was designated as Ride 1, but in all my years of collecting records, I'd never encountered a **Bozo's Merry-Go-Round Music Ride 2**. Then, back around 2007, Peter Muldavin, the world's leading expert on vintage (78-rpm) children's records, provided me with a copy of Ride 2 through his website <http://kiddierekordking.com/index.html>. This record follows the same format as Ride 1. Following Bozo's introduction, Side A was *Artists' Life Waltz* by Strauss, while Side B had *The Thunderer March* by Sousa. It appears that only these two records were ever released.

Back in 1954, there were still plenty of opportunities to hear live band organ music. It was only after the old-time amusement parks and their carousels began disappearing at an alarming rate that the demand arose for carousel-related items such as carved wooden figures and recordings of band organ music.

Perhaps you also had these records when you were growing up. They can now be heard by WJU members on our mywju.org website, under the Preservation - Circus Music tab.



Those of us who grew up in the 1950s can be thankful some record producer unwittingly provided us with four good examples of the music that has been delighting generations of children (and their parents) to the present day.

Many years later, noted circus and amusement park authority Fred Dahlinger identified the band organ heard on my Bozo recording as a **Wurlitzer 165** instrument. At least two of these organs were known to have been in the Los Angeles area back then, where they would have been convenient to Capitol Records' recording engineers.

It would appear there are currently twelve Wurlitzer 165 model band organs still in operating condition, including the one in Baraboo. And it is the only coin-operated one.



**Wurlitzer 165 Band Organ**

## CIRCUS BAND ORGANS

By Rod Everhart, WJU #1351

Mechanical organs were used by circuses during the second half of the nineteenth century. The term "band organ" came into use in the U.S. around 1895. The intent of these instruments was to recreate orchestral and military band music via automation, using the organ's elaborate pipes and percussion to deliver the sound.

One of the most famous band organs in the world is the **Royal American Shows Bandwagon**. Built in Europe around 1905, this band organ weighs over 3,000 pounds and is 17 feet wide, eight feet high and four feet deep. The instrument is housed in a custom built wagon. The organ is comprised of several thousand parts, including over 400 pipes, two drums, a cymbal and chimes. It can play virtually any musical composition, from marches to overtures, and effectively re-creates the sound of an 80-piece orchestra. The organ features an elaborate hand-carved and painted façade covered with real gold and silver leaf. Included are seven carved figures – two pairs of dancers in a Louis XV wardrobe, two bell-ringers that actually ring the bells, and an animated band-mistress who leads the organ with her head and hand motions. The façade also presents detailed murals of Greek gods and musical angels.

In the early 1910s, the C.W. Parker Company, then the world's largest builder of amusement devices, owned this particular instrument. It was last used in commercial service with the Royal American Shows, the world's largest railroad carnival. For over twenty years, the band organ toured North America with the show. In 1992, the band organ was officially "retired" and put on a long-term loan as an attraction at The Wisconsin Historical Society's Circus World Museum.

The museum also preserves at least four smaller band organs, dating back to 1906. One is housed in a circus parade bandwagon, another accompanies a vintage carousel, and two provide musical entertainment in the circus exhibit halls.



**The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company** began operations in Cincinnati, OH in 1853, founded by Franz Rudolph Wurlitzer, a German immigrant. Originally, the company imported stringed, woodwind and brass instruments from Germany. In doing so, it had significant contracts to provide instruments to the United States military during the American Civil War and the Spanish-American War. The company began manufacturing pianos in 1880 and relocated to North Tonawanda, NY. In 1896, Wurlitzer manufactured its first coin-operated pianos.

Because of the popularity of theater organs and player pianos in support of silent movies, the company expanded into providing those products, as well as orchestrions and nickelodeons.

The "fairground organ" was developed in the late 1800s in response to a call for louder music in support of mechanical rides at fairs. These devices were also called "barrel organs" and then "band organs", and were most popular in supporting carousels, or "Merry-Go-Rounds."

During the hard times of the 1930s Depression era when demand dropped for its expensive products, Wurlitzer moved strongly into "jukeboxes", for which they are now best known.

# The Myrtle Beach Ruth Organ

By Eric Beheim, WJU #66

In June 1964, shortly after I'd graduated from high school, my family drove down to Myrtle Beach, S. C. to visit my aunt and uncle who were living there in retirement. In those days, it was still the "Old Myrtle Beach" and not at all like it is today: miles and miles of shopping malls and strip shopping centers, fast food joints, souvenir shops en masse, and amusement centers that look like those at the Disney World and Universal attractions in Orlando, Florida.

One night, we all went to the Pavilion Amusement Park, an 11-acre facility located right across the street from the ocean. The center piece of this complex was a huge band organ that had been built in 1906 by A. Ruth & Sohn in Baden, Germany and which had eventually ended up in Myrtle Beach in the 1950s.

Those who are familiar with the big Royal American Shows band organ now on display at the Circus World Museum will have some idea of the size of the Myrtle Beach Ruth Organ. It was 20 feet long, 11 feet high, 7 feet deep and weighed approximately 2 tons. Its façade included 18 hand carved figures 12 of which moved in rhythm with the music while others beat drums. The organ itself had 400 different pipes, a snare drum, a bass drum, a cymbal, and chimes. In addition to the usual marches and waltzes, its repertoire included overtures, vintage show tunes, and medleys of opera and operetta selections, all heard in some of the finest arrangements ever made for a concert fairground organ.

Unlike band organs that use paper rolls, the Myrtle Beach Ruth Organ used folding cardboard music, much of it dating from the early 1900s. This cardboard music was contained in 17 large wooden crates, each of which held about 140 meters of music and weighed about 125 pounds. Needless to say, it required a great amount of physical effort on the part of park employees to keep changing out the music crates every 45 minutes or so, night after night.

The Myrtle Beach Ruth Organ was housed in its own special enclosure. One side opened up to display its façade. Facing this enclosure were rows of benches, so that visitors could sit and listen to the music while watching the organ's animated figures move. That's where I spent most of the evening, sitting there listening to the organ.

Over the years I tried to locate recordings of the Myrtle Beach Ruth organ, but without success. Then, early in 2008, I came across an article written by Ron Keisler, telling how, in 2005, his wife Glynn had undertaken the Herculean task of repairing the Myrtle Beach Ruth Organ's original cardboard music, most of which was in bad shape and no longer playable. The organ itself was due to be restored by the Stinson Band Organ Company, which would be installing a MIDI interface that eliminated the need for the old cardboard music.

However, Ron and Glynn felt that this meant the organ would no longer continue to play the same great music it had played for so many years.

In order for the original cardboard music to be scanned for MIDI, however, it first had to be made playable again. This involved sorting, identifying, matching up, and re-taping loose sections of music as well as making up new replacement sections for what was missing by transferring the notes from sheet music scores onto blank cardboard.

Those interested in reading more about what was involved in repairing the 17 crates of the Myrtle Beach Ruth Organ's folding cardboard music should read Ron's article. (Google: *MUSIC OF THE MYRTLE BEACH RUTH*)

I later corresponded with Ron and Glynn and found them to be a most interesting couple. (It turned out that Glynn's father had played saxophone in Merle Evans' band when the Ringling show appeared in South Carolina.)

Myrtle Beach's Pavilion Amusement Park was later purchased by developers who demolished it in 2006. At that time, the Myrtle Beach Ruth Organ was placed into storage where, as best as I can determine, it remains to this day. The Pavilion's former site is now "wall to wall" condominiums and sprawl.

Although no commercial recordings were ever made of the Myrtle Beach Ruth Organ, Ron sent me a few tapes that he had made of it playing its original cardboard music. From these, I selected the best numbers and put together the following play list, which WJU members can enjoy on the Windjammers Website ... [mywju.org](http://mywju.org) ... Preservation/Circus Music tab:

*Merry Widow Waltz Medley, Raymond Overture, España Waltz, Hungarische Lustspiel, Gypsy Baron Waltz, Oberon Overture, Aida Grand March, Prince Hinrich March, Second Hungarian Rhapsody, Give Me a Roll on the Drum*





# Karl King and the Music Roll Pirates

By Eric Beheim, WJU #66

The very first time I heard *Barnum and Bailey's Favorite*, it was being played by the band organ of the carousel at Puritas Springs, a medium-sized amusement park once located on Cleveland's western border. This would have been about 1958 when I was twelve. Not long afterward, I heard it again on a record by Frederick Fennell and the Eastman Wind Ensemble and was able to put a title to the music.

Many years later, I ordered a commercial tape of band organ music from an outfit called Baptist Sound & Manufacturing located in Jacksonville, Illinois. This tape, which had about two-hours worth of music, was intended for use by amusement parks and carousel operators that didn't have a working band organ. Among the selections on this tape were *Barnum and Bailey's Favorite* and *Robinson's Grand Entry*.

Nowadays you can look up just about anything on-line. Recently I did an on-line search for *Barnum and Bailey's Favorite* along with band organ rolls and found that both it and *Robinson's Grand Entry* had been on Roll #13281 made by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company, once a leading manufacturer of band organs.

Just out of curiosity, I contacted Andy Glover (WJU #423) who is Executive Vice President of C. L. Barnhouse to see if the company's files had licensing agreements or correspondence with the Wurlitzer Company regarding the use of these two numbers. Zero-zilch-nada.

Andy reminded me that, prior to the formation of ASCAP in 1914, music composers and their publishers were seldom if

ever compensated when their copyrighted works appeared on player piano rolls or band organ rolls. Later, laws were passed to compensate copyright owners for such usages. The agreements to license copyrighted works for use on music rolls were referred to as "mechanical licenses" due to the mechanical nature of these rolls. In fact, such agreements are referred to as "mechanicals" to this day.

Many of the working band organs in operation today have been converted to operate using MIDI discs rather than paper rolls. There are, in fact, people who are preparing new MIDI arrangements for use on band organs. I asked Andy if C. L. Barnhouse ever receives requests for "mechanical licenses" for these new arrangements and he said that, in the twelve years he has been with the company, he has never seen one. He also told me a funny story about how Bob Barnhouse, Sr. (grandson of the company's founder) once encountered a coin-operated merry-go-round type "kiddie" ride outside a store and which was playing a Barnhouse tune. The name of the company that made the device was obtained from its coinbox. After the Barnhouse attorney sent them a letter, a settlement and license agreement were soon obtained.

I sent Andy e-mail files of the two King marches from the Baptist Sound and Manufacturing tape, which he found quite interesting since they departed somewhat from the original marches as published.

WJU members can hear these two tunes, played on a Wurlitzer 150 band organ, on our website at [mywju.org](http://mywju.org) and under the Preservation - Circus Music tab.

## HOW TO WRITE GOOD

1. Avoid alliteration. Always.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. Avoid cliches like the plague. They're old hat.
4. Comparisons are as bad as cliches.
5. Be more or less specific.
6. Writers should never generalize.
7. Don't be redundant; don't use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous; less is more.
8. Who needs rhetorical questions?
9. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.

Ten: Be consistent!

From the new humor book  
by Pat Wheeler (WJU #2636)

(available at Amazon and others)

### Glossary

**Accelerando** - put the pedal to metal.

**Accidentals** - notes that don't blend in too well with the rest of the band.

**Augmented fifth** - a quart.

**Bombardo** - the entry of all brass players at once while playing fortissimo.

**Cool** - music that is not so hot.

**Dynamics** - mysterious squiggles in the music that only conductors understand.

**Fortissimo** - a trumpet player's mezzo-piano.

**Sheet Music** - what musicians sleep on.

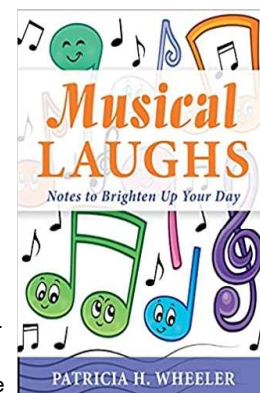
**Slur** - technique for blending in when you make a late entry.

**Swing** - what drummers do with sticks.

**Tempo di Marcia** - play at the same rate that Marcia is playing.

**Trombone** - a manually-operated, wind-driven, pitch approximator.

**Whole note** - a note with a hole printed in the middle of it.



# REMEMBERING HAROLD RONK, THE SINGING RINGMASTER

By Eric Beheim, WJU #66

No discussion of the musical programs presented by the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus would be complete without some mention of the "Singing Ringmaster", Harold Ronk. Since 2021 marks the centennial of his birth, it is appropriate this year for us to look back upon his 30-year circus career.

Harold Wilson Ronk was born on January 31, 1921, in Peoria, Illinois. Throughout his childhood he took singing lessons and appeared in school productions. Graduating from Bradley University in 1941 with a degree in music and theater, he served as a Navy communications officer in the South Pacific during World War II.

Mr. Ronk got his start in show business in 1948 when Broadway composer Sigmund Romberg hired him for a national tour of the musical *My Romance*. When the tour ended, Ronk settled in Washington, D.C. where he taught voice and became a soloist at the National Presbyterian Church. He also made guest appearances and recordings with the National Symphony and did concert work throughout the country.

In 1951, he auditioned for John Murray Anderson under the mistaken impression that Anderson was casting for a Broadway show. Anderson was, in fact, looking for a vocalist for the 1951 Edition of the Ringling Circus.

It was Anderson, in his capacity as director of Ringling's production numbers, who had first introduced a vocalist into the Circus' performance, beginning with the 1948 Edition. Although Harold Ronk would later be hailed as Ringling's first "singing ringmaster," that honor actually belongs to tenor Bill Tabbett. However, thanks to Anderson, Ronk got the job and for the next thirty years served as Ringling's primary vocalist-announcer, also becoming known as "The Voice of the Circus."

During his early years with the Ringling, Ronk only appeared during those "big venue" performances that took place in Madison Square Garden, the Boston Garden, and Philadelphia. Once the circus began its cross-country tour, however, others took over the vocalizing.

Then, beginning in 1957, the first year that Ringling went out as an "indoor" circus, he toured with the show for the entire season.



Unlike most of the other circus performers, Ronk did NOT ride or live onboard the circus train during his years with Ringling. He preferred staying in hotels.

In 1961, Ronk was featured on *A Day at the Circus* with "Mr. Singing Ringmaster," a long-playing album of music taken largely from Ringling production numbers and the DeMille film *The Greatest Show on Earth*.

The album's selections included *Popcorn and Lemonade* (Henry Sullivan), *Be a Jumping Jack* (Victor Young), *Polka Dot Polka* (Richard Barstow and written for the 1961 Edition's elephant act), *Be a Clown* (Cole Porter), *Over and Over Again* (Richard Rodgers), and of course, *The Greatest Show on Earth* movie theme (Victor Young).



WJU Members can now hear this entire album at [MYWJU.ORG](http://MYWJU.ORG) via our website's **PRESERVATION** tab.

In 1962, while I was still in high school, I met Harold Ronk while the Ringling show was appearing in the old Cleveland Arena. Just before the start of the evening performance, I was visiting the bandstand to have Merle Evans autograph a record album for me, when Ronk, Trevor Bale, Bob Dover, and clown Frankie Saluto all stopped by to chat with Evans. Taking advantage of this opportunity, I had all of them autograph my souvenir program which is now one of my most cherished possessions.





In 1965, Harold Ronk appeared along with Merle Evans on the album **Circus Spectacular**, which 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.*

Unfortunately, for many circus music fans, Ronk's overly flamboyant announcements on this album, along with some totally unnecessary sound effects, overshadowed the band and ruined what should have been an outstanding album of traditional circus music.



Beginning in 1969, the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, which was now owned by Irvin and Israel Feld, sent out two units. Harold Ronk, along with Merle Evans and some of the performers from the 1968 Edition went out with the 109th Edition Red Unit, which featured Gunther Gebel



**Ringling Ringmaster Harold Ronk November 30, 1969**

Williams in his first American tour. That was also Merle Evans' last year with Ringling, closing out his years on the Ringling bandstand on November 30, 1969, in Utica, NY.

For the 1970 season, Ronk toured with the 100th Edition Blue Unit and would remain with the Blue Unit until his retirement at the end of the 1981 season, some 30 years after his first appearance with the Ringling Circus.

On August 8, 1974, I attended a matinee performance of the 104th Edition Blue Unit in Anaheim. I had just been released from active duty in the Navy and had arrived back in San Diego too late to see the show when it had appeared in the San Diego Sports Arena. But, I was able to get to Anaheim. That afternoon, Harold Ronk graciously inscribed and autographed both of his record albums for me.

Two years later in the San Diego Sports Arena, on the night that I played for my very first Ringling performance, Harold Ronk was there in his capacity as the Circus' announcer-vocalist. He was also there in 1978 when we taped the Ringling TV Special **Circus Super-Heroes** in San Diego.

The last time I worked with Harold Ronk was when the 110th Edition Blue Unit appeared in San Diego in 1980. Following his retirement the next year, Harold Ronk returned to his boyhood home of Peoria, Illinois. He passed away on August 2, 2006 at the age of 85.

In a 1965 interview, Harold Ronk said:

***"Some friends of mine in musical theater feel I have wasted my talent, but I don't think so. Popcorn and lemonade are certainly a far cry from 'Pagliacci,' but essentially, a stage is a stage. I feel I have given something in the way of fun and razzle-dazzle that they cannot give."***

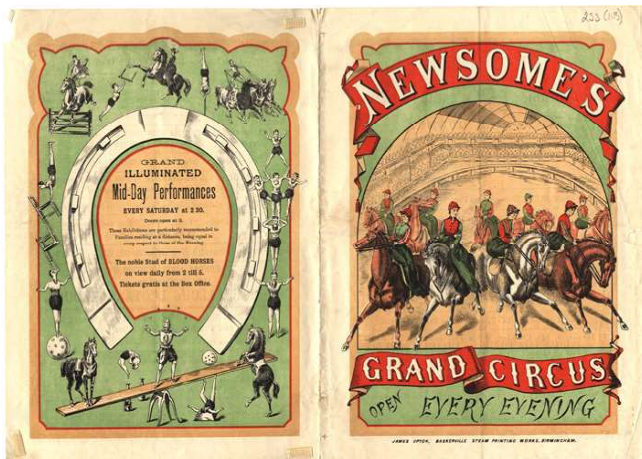
# BRITISH ISLES 19th CENTURY CIRCUS BANDS

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

PART 2 - 1864 to 1883

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

- June 1864 saw **Edmond's (late Wombwell's) Menagerie** visiting Cheltenham, when their grand entry in to the town was led by the Royal Menagerie Band, conducted by Mr. Drake (who later that summer took up a position as leader and founder of the **Sherborne Town Band** – a seasonal band created for that summer. Harrison N. Booth was a player in the **Menagerie Band** in 1864, before leaving to marry Emily Ward in Retford.
- **The International Circus**, a troupe of acrobats and equestrians, appeared at the Zoological Gardens at Clifton, in September 1864, accompanied by their circus band, which shared the musical entertainment on the day with Mr. U. Richardson's band from Bristol.
- **Boorn's Russian Circus Band** was advertising for engagements in October 1864. Having played with Boorn throughout the summer, they had just been released. The band consisted of first, second and third cornets, Eb bombardons, Bb euphonium, and Eb tenor sax.
- **Newsome's Circus** visited Carlisle in November 1864, and the band, under the baton of Mr. Saujeck, much impressed the audiences.



- In October 1865, on a visit to Scarborough, **Newsome's Circus** gave a benefit performance in aid of the Scarborough Lifeboat Institution, on which occasion the lifeboat, fully manned by her gallant crew, was drawn in procession through the town by six fine horses, accompanied by the Circus Band.
- February 1866 saw **Newsome's Circus Band** engaged to play music for the Upperby Church Bazaar, near Carlisle, where the Circus was performing.

• **Manders' Gigantic Menagerie** was installed at the old Royal Mews in Windsor, in October 1867. **The Menagerie Band** was conducted by Alexander D. Millar (who had previously led the **Wombwell's and Edmonds'** bands) and performed operatic and oratorio selections, delighting crowds of listeners.

• In July 1869 **Newsome's Circus Band** was engaged to play the National Anthem on the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Hull.

• **Mr. Powell's Circus** visited Nailsworth in July 1869, and the Circus Band provided entertainment, together with the **Stroud Rifle Band**, at a fête and gala.

• **Sangers' Circus** and its "better than average" Circus Band greatly entertained the crowds at Southport in May 1870.

• June 1870 saw **Mander's Royal Menagerie Band** taking part in the Lady Godiva procession in Coventry, seated in a gilded chariot drawn by three elephants, two dromedaries, and two camels. Lady Godiva was "dressed" in flesh tights, which fitted close around the neck, and wore a white fall.

• In July 1870 E. Cook advertised his services as an Eb bombardon player, having previously performed with **Manders' Star Menagerie** and **First Class Circus Band** (on the circular bombardon).

• Robert Southworth, who died in Beverley in August 1870, had been a member of **Wombwell's Menagerie Band**, and had travelled with the Menagerie for 45 years. He had also constructed the coffin for George Wombwell with timbers recovered from the wreck of the Royal George, not using a single nail, all the parts being jointed together.

• **MacCollum's Circus Band**, on a visit to Bristol, was engaged to accompany St. Philip's Conservative Association in the city-wide Conservative demonstration at Bristol in July 1871.



• **Sangers' Circus Band** was engaged for the Whitsuntide procession at Peel Park, Bradford, in 1872, in advance of the circus performances (for which the arranging committee had paid £400).



- **Allen's Excelsior Circus** played a short season at Parson's Field, Durham in May 1874. Their splendid Circus Brass Band was led by J.G. Cooper, and entertained the crowds each day. The opening selections were "Maritana" and "Valentine Galop".

- Christmas Day, 1874, saw members of the **Manders' Menagerie Band** augment the local volunteer band in the procession of the new Mayor of Carmarthen to the Tabernacle Baptist Chapel. Later, on 5 February 1875, a grand concert was held in the Carmarthen Assembly Rooms, organised by the Mayor, David Morgan, for the benefit of the Menagerie Band who were "unable as yet to remove from there."



- **Manders' Menagerie Band** eventually escaped from Carmarthen, and were engaged during their visit to Llanstephan in June 1875, to perform at the Ivorite Fete being held there.

- **Wombwell's Menagerie** visited Sunderland at New Year, 1876, and the band was greatly admired for the quality of its music.

- **Batty's Grand Circus** advertising for brass band members in February 1876.

- **Hengler's Circus** visited Dublin, in June 1876, and set up in the gardens of the Rotundo Lying-In Hospital, which was raising funds via the circus and also via a skating rink established at the other end of the gardens. The Circus Band kept up the music unceasingly from half-past seven to half-past ten o'clock each night.

- The Wolverhampton Fair, held in June 1876, engaged the **Wombwell's Menagerie Band** for its procession, and the use of the band carriage with elephants, camels, etc. was eagerly accepted by the organising committee.

- **Hengler's Circus** auditorium, during their visit to Liverpool in January 1877, was used for a large Conservative demonstration, and the Circus Band alleviated the tedium of waiting with their music.

- The Bradford Peel Park Whitsuntide charities committee engaged **Pinder's Circus** for their gala in May 1877. The Pinder's Circus Band, together with six other local brass bands, provided musical entertainment over the two days.

- **Fossett's Circus** visited Hartlepool in May 1877 and its troupe was paraded around the town by the Circus Band.

- February 1878 saw the **Wombwell's Menagerie** in Bristol. A procession took place with the Band in a carriage and with the great elephant leading the way along Queen's Road. When opposite the fountain in the Triangle, "*one of the urchin tribe teased the animal, giving him orange peel. Upon his repeating the offer, the elephant took the boy up with his trunk, twirled him round over his head, and deposited him safely – screaming with terror – in a heap of mud close by, but quite out of harm's way from the vehicle following.*"

- **Keith's Circus** building in Derby burned down in March 1879, causing the death of the groom, Ralph White, who died with all the circus horses. At his funeral the Circus Band played the *Dead March* from Saul, using instruments borrowed from the local Volunteer Band, as theirs were all destroyed in the fire. Later, in April there was a benefit concert for **Keith's Circus**, at the Drill Hall, Derby, involving **Keith's Circus Band**, the **Midland Railway Band** and the **Derby Volunteer Band**. During the evening the circus bandleader, Mr. Bell, was presented with new instruments provided by subscribers to the fund set up to aid the Circus. These consisted of three Bb cornets, two tenor horns, one euphonium, one bombardon, one tenor slide trombone, one bass drum and one side drum – each instrument inscribed with "*Destruction by fire of Keith's Circus at Derby on March 25th 1879. Presented by Mr. Alderman Leech, on behalf of the subscribers of the relief fund*". The concert programme was: march "*The Advanced Guard*" (W.V. Scholes), the combined bands; "*Les Cloches de Corneville*" (Planquette), DVB; trombone solo "*The Village Blacksmith*" (Weiss); valse "*Mello*" (Waldteufel), DVB; overture "*Semiramide*" (Rossini), MRB; "*Pas des Patineurs*" (F. Godfrey), MRB; selection "*Lurline*" (Wallace), KCB; fantasia "*Songs of England*" (W.V. Scholes), DVB; euphonium solo "*Cavatina*" (Bellini); selection "*Scotch Airs*" (Boulderstone), MRB; valse "*Basse de Nuits*", MRB; selection "*Tannhauser*" (Wagner), DVB; and "*God Save the Queen*", combined bands.

- For August Bank Holiday, 1881, and through to October 1881, **Percy Williams' Great Circus** appeared at the Crystal Palace and the Circus Band entertained the audiences on the Palace Lawns at intervals through the day.

- The circus band of **Fosset's Circus**, at Wakefield in November 1881, lost several instruments including a cornet and a horn, which were stolen by Henry Buckley, an ex-employee of the circus. The instruments belonged to Thomas Howes, the circus bandmaster, and two of his players, Thomas Smith and William Hodges.

- **Stoodley's Circus** visited Newbury in June 1883, and its Circus Band was engaged to play at the annual fete and gala in July, together with another band, which concluded with a balloon ascent and fireworks.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## BECKY GUTH, WJU #3588



Becky Guth, and her husband Eric, joined Windjammers in 2015. Both are excellent trombone musicians. In April, 2021, Becky was appointed to the position of Windjammers Unlimited Music Resource Coordinator, replacing librarian Norman Woodrick, who resigned because of serious health considerations. So, Becky now heads the team responsible for cataloging, distributing, and maintaining our extensive music collection.

Becky grew up in Hilliard, Ohio, a suburb of Columbus. Her dad was a farmer and then tool & die mechanic, often working consecutive shifts at Westinghouse and General Motors. The music influence came from her mother, who had played flute as a youth. Around 5th grade her mom's flute came out of the closet. It was a 1915 Boston Wonder Flute. Becky considered it a "dinosaur" and she hated it for multiple reasons. But she did play it through 7th grade.

When the high school band director went into "recruiting mode" because of a shortage of trombone players in the band program, he invited Becky after her 7th grade year to his house where he took a Conn rimless silver trombone off his basement wall and handed it to her. She was instantly hooked. Since she had started taking piano lessons as a second grader, reading bass clef was not an issue. Further, her large hands dealt with the trombone slide far better than the flute keys. The high school band director provided private lessons.

Becky's parents found her an Olds Super Trombone with fluted sides on the slide and she still has that instrument. Her primary trombone, however, is a King 3B that she later bought from an Ohio State University student. During high school, Becky participated in numerous solo and ensemble competitions, generally placing first in the Class A divisions. As a high school senior at Hilliard High School, she was voted Best Musician.

Unlike many other schools, the high school band played new music every week which honed her sight-reading skills. At one point, Jack Evans, an instructor at Ohio State University, hosted a "Sight-Reading Clinic" and of the 25 high school students attending, Becky was the only female. "Ladies first", Evans declared for the kick-off auditions. Becky stood out for another reason: The prior day she had fractured her wrist in a volleyball game accident and so was playing trombone with her right hand in a cast. Her future husband, Eric, was in the group as a trombonist from Reynoldsburg High School. He was impressed and he remembered her.

Following high school graduation, Becky enrolled in Ohio State University's five-year pharmacy program, and Eric enrolled in the General Motors Engineering Institute in Flint, Michigan. However, a year later Eric was at Ohio State enrolled as a Music Education major. That first week, he found himself sitting next to Becky in the OSU Scarlet Band. The next week, he was promoted to the Concert Band, but the die was cast. Becky and Eric began dating the following year.

Following his degree in 1977, Eric decided to go back to General Motors in their tool & die apprenticeship program. Becky graduated in 1978 and took the State Pharmacy Boards in July. That same month, on the 22nd, she and Eric were married in a double wedding ceremony where Becky's sister, Susan, also was married. Can you imagine a proud father coming down the aisle with a daughter on each side?

Becky was a retail pharmacist for several years, encountering some excitement along the way. She testified in court against several accused of prescription forgery. Once the convicted were released from prison they attempted retaliation, pistol-whipping Becky's successor. But Becky was by then employed by a nursing home supplier.

In 1988, Becky joined the Ohio State University Hospital as the night pharmacist, working an 80-hour week and then having two weeks off. The hospital had seven buildings and 11 floors, so quite the demanding assignment. She did this for ten years, retiring in 1998. Along the way, sons Kevin and Scott were born.

Was there time for music during her pharmacy roles? Indeed, there was. Her Ohio State University Hospital shift started at 10 p.m., allowing for band events each evening at 7 p.m. Becky participated in the Greater Columbus Concert Band, Worthington Civic Band, Hilliard Community Band, Swings-the-Thing Big Band, and the Columbus Women's Orchestra (one of two existing in the United States at that time.)



In 2004, Becky and Eric moved to Bradenton, FL. Her sister was already living there and so the Guths were familiar with the area. In 2011, Becky's parents moved into the house next door. A further "small world" connection is that Windjammers Diane & Jim Roytz bought the house on the other side of Becky's parents.

Once in Florida, Becky and Eric joined the Manatee Community Band and their swing band. They joined the Suncoast Concert Band and Becky is currently president of its board. They also play in the Venice Concert Band. For a time, they were part of the Sarasota Concert Band. Becky no longer plays with them but continues as their librarian, having digitized all their music and continues handling music distribution. The Guths also previously played with the Sarasota Gold Band and the Sarasota Big Band.

Becky's librarian duties have been extensive, serving five organizations currently and an additional two previously. She has four scanners in her home, one of which is a commercial high-speed scanner.

We are more than delighted to have her music resource skill-set filling this critical role with our organization.

Thank you, Becky!!



Becky Guth

## HENRY FILLMORE? He needs your help at the University of Miami.

By Paul D'Angelo, WJU #4009

At age 56, composer Henry Fillmore moved to Florida for health reasons. He became "Uncle Henry" to Florida school musicians and was often called the "patron saint of Florida school bands." For over 19 years Fillmore devoted himself to advancing music education. He traveled the state encouraging school superintendents to add band programs to their curriculums.



original works and approximately 750 arrangements for bands. He composed "Orange Bowl March" and conducted it with combined high school bands during the Orange Bowl half-time shows. His last composition, "The President's March", was dedicated to the University's then-president, Dr. Jay F.W. Pearson. Fillmore was the University's "Permanent Guest Conductor" and touched thousands of lives favorably, regardless of skin color. Back then, he was "The Spirit of Miami U."

After he died December 7, 1956, with minor exceptions, his estate went to the University of Miami band foundation. Those funds enabled Fillmore Hall to be built and provided music scholarships. Henry Fillmore's spirit was ever present in the University's "Band of the Hour", named following the 1948 Orange Bowl halftime show where Fillmore announced that his "Man of the Hour" march was being played by the "Band of the Hour."

Unfortunately, the "cancel culture" is at work. Earlier this year, **University of Miami President Julio Frenk and University of Miami Board of Trustees Chair Hilarie Bass, Esq.** issued a statement that included: *"Henry Fillmore, after whom the hall is currently named, used patently offensive language and images to promote his music. His most prominent work – the success of which led to his renown and likely the naming – was full of racist caricatures that amounted to dehumanizing Black people."* Their conclusion was Fillmore Hall would be renamed and the Fillmore name erased from the campus.

What is being referenced, of course, is Fillmore's "Trombone Family" of 15 trombone smears, ragtime novelty numbers that were often used for clown walk-arounds in the circus. Those were but a fraction of Fillmore's more than 250

Granted, in today's society, the advertising for the trombone smears series composed 1908-1929 would be unthinkable. But it is now being taken out-of-context to label Fillmore as a racist. Those who knew him well firmly deny that. He was a fan of Scott Joplin and his ragtime music, and he was a colleague of black musicians coming up to Cincinnati from New Orleans. He honored black musicians with whom he associated and often taught. It is my opinion that Henry Fillmore was not at all racist. Fillmore's legacy should be the breadth of his music and his tireless efforts on behalf of Florida music programs, during which there was no sign of racism on his part. I believe the University is overreacting.

Windjammers Unlimited named Henry Fillmore to its Hall of Fame in 1988. In 2008 he was given the Florida Bandmasters Association's "Roll of Distinction" honor.

It appears the University of Miami is focusing on his few outdated advertisements while not properly acknowledging the great contributions Henry Fillmore actually made to advance UM as a world-class institution. **If you agree, please write Frenk and Bass at 230 Ashe Building, 1252 Memorial Drive, Coral Gables, FL 33146.**



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*Photo by Jeff Weiland*



**WINDJAMMERS CONCERT CIRCUS BAND**  
performing July 10, 2021 at the  
Central States Circus Soirée in Baraboo, WI.  
Charles Conrad (WJU #1525) conducting  
Timothy Noel Tegge (WJU #2937), host

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

**WJU Annual Convention #50 - January 11-16, 2022 at Marriott Courtyard, Bradenton, Florida**  
**Windjammers Unlimited Summer Meet - July 19-24, 2022 in Springfield, MO**