

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

APRIL R. ZINK, WJU #1253



April Zink with Bandleader Rob Slowik in Atlanta in 2008, playing with the Big Apple Circus.

April Zink caught the “circus bug” early, taking on a Windjammer role with The Circus Kingdom while still in college. And that passion for everything circus has only increased over the years.

Starting in 1989, she was with The Circus Kingdom for four years.

Recruited as a college student, she joined the ecumenical circus, traveling and performing each summer, and during two winter breaks. During this time she covered well over 100,000 miles and 21 states. Not only was she playing trumpet in the circus band, she served as traveling office and personnel manager in support of the directors, Rev. L. David Harris and his wife Trudy (WJU #3811). That work included organizing publicity and promotional materials, assisting in public relations, ticketing, concessions, logistics, and other key aspects of the show. When the band recorded three CDs, April was the musical producer and graphic designer.

During the same time period (1990-1993), April was the Art Department manager for Elida Entertainment, where she was responsible for completing an Advertising Book for each day of a 70-day tour of a circus/magic show, known as the *Famous Cole Indoor Circus*.

April returned after the first circus season to graduate from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL with a B.S. Degree in American History and a minor in music. She also has an Associate of Science Degree from Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois where she majored in Computer Science and minored in Music Performance. At Highland, she was in the Jazz Band, Royal Scots musicians, Madrigal Wind Ensemble, Pep Band, and in the Pit Orchestra for five musicals. At Northern Illinois, she was in the Huskie Marching Band, University Band, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band 4, and the University Chorus.

After college she held various administrative positions, including being at Circus Day Foundation from 2002 to 2004, where she was Executive Assistant and Office Manager. While there, she was the founding director and conductor of the St. Louis Community Circus Band. Then in 2004, she joined Nationwide Insurance Company in

Gainesville, FL, and rose to her current position as Premium Audit Representative.

Included in April's arsenal of skills is not only excellent trumpet-playing, but also fire-eating, juggling, wire-walking, unicycle and trampoline talents. No doubt, these abilities were developed and honed during her tour with The Circus Kingdom. When she signed on with them in May, 1989, it was as 3rd trumpet in the 10-piece brass band playing primarily traditional circus music. Three weeks into the tour, however, the other two trumpeters were fired for drinking on a show day. Thus, she replaced the Solo Trumpeter and finished the remainder of the season as the only trumpet. She performed as many as three 2-hour performances daily. Overall, April did six tours with The Circus Kingdom.

With The Circus Kingdom, the summer tours were performed as indoor or open-air outdoor venues. The winter tours were performed under a 40x80-foot oval vinyl circus tent. Local sponsors included state and federal prisons, nursing homes, hospitals, shopping malls, department stores, civic groups, and charitable organizations. In addition to the music performances, April's job requirements included driving the personnel van, tent and show rigging set-up, and tear-down. In fact, if capable, all members of the troupe were required to assist in all aspects of show rigging and prop placement.

April joined Windjammers Unlimited, Inc, in 1989. She has been an active member, serving on the Board of Trustees 2004-2005, and again currently, 2017-2020. April was Editor of our *Circus Fanfare* publication for nine years, from August 2006 through August 2015. During all of these years, April has attended every Convention in Florida since 1995 and most of our Summer Meets.

In addition, since 1998, April has been a member of Circus Fans Association of America (CFA) and is currently serving her second four- year term on their Board of Trustees. She has been a member of CFA Tent #122 in Sarasota since 2008, and the Ron “Toto” Johnson Digital Tent since 2017. She is also a member of the Circus Historical Society (since 1999), Showfolks of Sarasota (since 2015), International Independent Showmen's Association (since 2007), and Outdoor Amusement Business Association (since 2002.)

As you would expect, over the years April has had many trumpet opportunities, both in and out of the circus. But two gigs she particularly cherishes, is having had the

opportunity to play for the Big Apple Circus in Atlanta, GA in 2008, with Rob Slowik as bandleader, and being on the L.E. Barnes Circus in March 2001, replacing bandleader Marshall Eckelman while he was on medical leave.

April has been a member of the Gainesville Community Band since 2004 and served on their Board 2008-2011. She is a ten-year member of the Gainesville Pops! Wind Ensemble and on their Steering Committee. She is also associated with the Sarasota Circus Concert Band (since 1996), Santa Fe Brass Band, Charlottesville Municipal Band, St. Augustine Community Orchestra, and the Deland Little Symphony. From 1998 to 2000, and then since 2005, she has played in the Pit Orchestra for the Gainesville Community Playhouse.



April Zink and other Windjammers on the United States Bandwagon in the 2007 Macy's Parade



April is certainly no stranger to circus bandwagons and circus parades, having had the opportunity to be atop several over the years. She performed on historic bandwagons in Ringling's "Millennium" circus parades in Atlanta (1999) and Washington, DC (2000). In 2003 and 2004, April was a trumpeter for Andrew Glover's Circus Band in the July 4th VP Parades in St. Louis, MO. She was also a trumpeter for Schlarbaum on the United States bandwagon in Macy's 2007 Thanksgiving Day Parade, and on the F.J. Taylor bandwagon in 2009 for the Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee, WI.



April Zink and other Windjammers on the F.J. Taylor bandwagon in the 2009 Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee.

Perhaps needing more bandwagon time, April was also on the Van Amburg bandwagon in 2009 and 2010, for the International Circus City circus parades in Peru, IN.



July 2009. Peru, IN



July 2010. Peru, IN

Clearly, all-things-circus are a dominant force in April's life. And there are others, of course, such as her employer, her church, and her family and friends. But of all our current Windjammers members, April might well top the list for having played the most notes in a circus and circus parade environment, especially if we include our Windjammers sessions and events.

May all your days be circus days, April!