

The Advance Car

The Official Newsletter of the Circus Historical Society

December 2025

Season's greetings! We are pleased to bring you another edition of *The Advance Car*, the official e-newsletter of the Circus Historical Society.

Since our founding in 1939, the mission of the Circus Historical Society has been "to preserve, promote, and share through education the history and cultural significance of the circus and allied arts, past and present."

Since then, hundreds of CHS members have been accomplishing that mission by authoring *Bandwagon* articles and circus history books, speaking at conventions, producing content for our websites and other online and social media programs, teaching circus history classes, and working in the collections of the major circus history museums and libraries.

If you are not already a member and want to help preserve the ever-evolving history and cultural significance of circus and receive our *Bandwagon* journal quarterly, [click here](#) to learn more about the benefits of a CHS membership. Dues are still only \$60 per year.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season!

Bruce Hawley
President
Circus Historical Society

CHS Member Spotlight

Recognizing our members and their dedication to the preservation of circus history

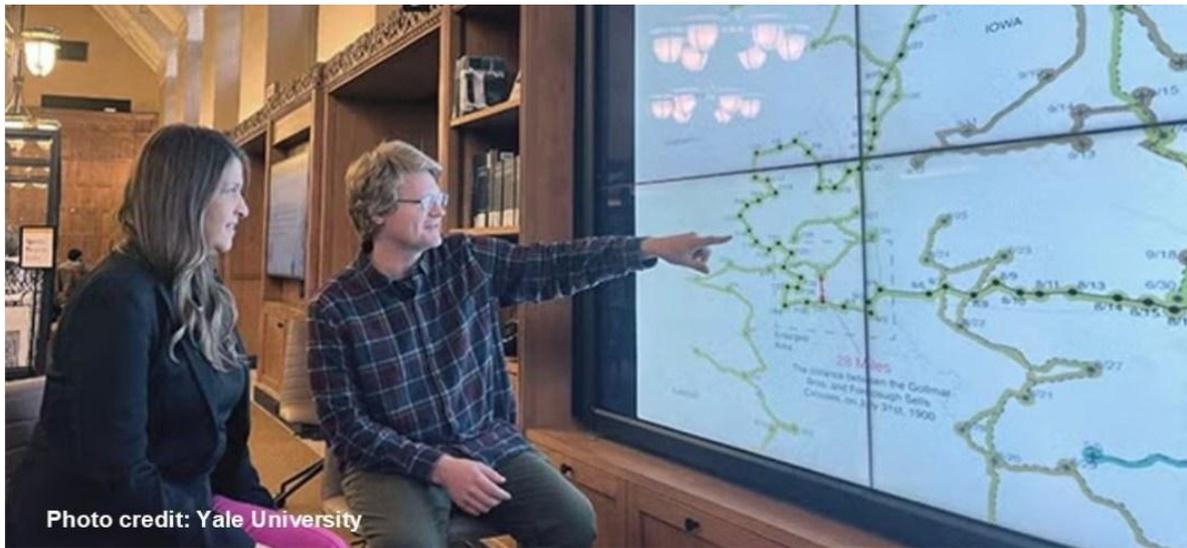


CHS Member Britt Lower wins 2025 Emmy!

Congratulations to CHS member **Britt Lower** for her win at the recent 2025 Emmy Awards show! Lower took home the award for the Best Lead Actress in a Drama Series for her outstanding work on *Severance*. [Click here](#) for details.

We had the honor of screening Lower's short film *Circus Person* (2020) at the 2023 Circus Historical Society Convention in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois. Congratulations, Britt!

Image: IMDB



Mapping Circus Routes

CHS member **Devin Jernigan** is bringing a fresh, data-driven perspective to circus history through his doctoral work at Yale University. A Ph.D. candidate in architecture, Jernigan is mapping the routes of American traveling circuses in the 19th and early 20th centuries, drawing on route books, ledgers, census microdata, and historic maps. With help from Yale Library's digital-humanities and geospatial experts, he has digitized historic routes and used advanced computer software to visualize how circuses moved across the country and how those movements reflected broader shifts related to population, transportation, and regional growth.

Devin's project, *Spectacular Nomadism: The Modernization of Space in the American Traveling Circus*, examines how circuses used space both on the lot and on the road. His detailed mapping of routes reveals territorial patterns, the transition from wagon to rail travel, and the competitive geography of show business. A lifelong circus enthusiast with family ties to the Minneapolis Zuhrah Shrine Circus, Devin recently presented his research at the 2025 American Historical Association meeting, where his work was praised for its innovative blend of scholarship and technology. [Click here](#) for details.



CHS Trustee Betsy Golden Kellem wins her second Emmy!

Self-described scholar of the unusual CHS Trustee Betsy Golden Kellem recently won her second New England Emmy Award!

Kellem earned the Best Performer-Narrator prize for her work on *Showman's Shorts*, a video series of the Barnum Museum.

Designed to introduce Barnum's world to new audiences in a format that is smart and fun, episodes can be seen at [Showman's Shorts](#).

If you're a CHS member who has recently promoted circus history through publication, presentations, media appearances, or community talks, let us know! We try to highlight as much as possible in each issue.

Email CHSmarketingpr@gmail.com

CHS News



2025 CHS Convention a Huge Success!

Almost one-hundred members and guests gathered in Las Vegas in October for our 2025 convention. Highlights included a keynote address by legendary ringmaster Johnathan Lee Iverson and an exciting competition performance of the Vegas Variety Circus Festival. We will publish a full report on the convention activities in the upcoming of *Bandwagon*.

Our next convention will take place in Baraboo, Wisconsin, during early June 2026. We will release details regarding the convention and the Call for Papers via email, our website, and social media channels in January.

Discounted convention registration fees and a subscription to our quarterly *Bandwagon* journal are two of the major benefits of a CHS membership. If you are not already a member, [click here](#) to join today. Dues are only \$60 per year.



CHS members: Don't forget to return your completed ballot for the 2025 Board of Trustees election! Ballots must be delivered on or before December 15, 2025 in order to be counted. See the paper ballot in your latest issue of *Bandwagon* for details about nominees and mailing.

Thank you for your continued support.

Coming Soon! The Untold Story of Jerry Bangs



In the next issue of *Bandwagon*, CHS Trustee **Brian Hollifield** tells a story that has been waiting nearly fifty years to be told—the extraordinary, long-buried memoir of **Jerry Bangs**, the Ringling gagman who helped shape modern clowning.

Circus historians will find a treasure trove in this newly-surfaced material, including an inside look at circus life during the Depression, John Ringling North's labor battles, and the war-time shortages that reshaped the industry. Jerry Bangs's letters—untouched for decades—give the article the warmth, humor, and candor of a man determined to document circus history "while still alive and able."

Brian Hollifield's story is a vivid, deeply human portrait of a behind-the-scenes creator whose contributions have long been overshadowed by the performers he supported. It's a story of resilience, creativity, and circus life lived from the inside out—and one you won't want to miss in the next *Bandwagon*.



**DEDICATED TO PRESERVING
THE RICH HISTORY OF CIRCUS.**

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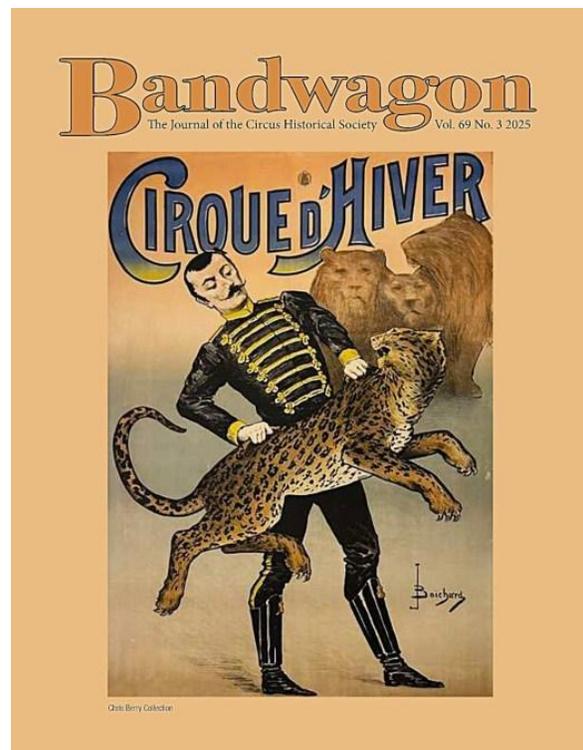
Before you close the books on 2025, please remember how grateful CHS remains for your participation in our organization! Without your dues and donations, we would be unable to offer the many circus-related experiences you've enjoyed in person and online.

If you're able to include CHS in your charitable giving this year, we are appreciative of your generosity. Many exciting enhancements and events are being planned, and your contributions, big or small, truly make a difference. To donate, [click here](#).

Bandwagon Delivery

Although the last *Bandwagon* was mailed on October 17, some US members did not receive their copies until late November. To help manage mailing delays, our printer will track the next issue from when they mail it until it is delivered to the destination post office. (They do not have the ability to track periodicals to the final address.)

To make sure that we have their current mailing address, members should [click here](#) to log on to their account on our Back Yard (members-only) website. They can also choose the Digital *Bandwagon* Only option, if desired. Members can expect to receive the upcoming issue by the third week of December. *Logon Tip:* If you have problems resetting your password, try refreshing your browser.





JOIN CHS TODAY!

Members have access
to publications, events,
a bookstore, and more!

Become a member at
circushistory.org

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