

# The Advance Car

The Official Newsletter of the Circus Historical Society

**June 2026**

We are pleased to bring you another edition of *The Advance Car*, the e-newsletter of the Circus Historical Society!

CHS is a volunteer-run, nonprofit tax-exempt organization whose mission is "to preserve, promote, and share through education the history and cultural significance of the circus and allied arts, past and present." Since 1939, CHS members have been preserving circus history by authoring *Bandwagon* articles and circus history books, speaking at conventions, working in the collections of the major circus history museums and libraries, teaching circus history courses at colleges and universities, and producing content for our websites, YouTube channel, and other online and social media programs. This issue features member activities and other CHS news involving outreach to other organizations who share our mission.

We distribute *The Advance Car* to both members and non-members. If you are not already a member and want to help us preserve the ever-evolving history of circus and receive our beautiful *Bandwagon* journal quarterly, [click here](#) to learn about the benefits of a CHS membership. Dues are still only \$60 per year!

Bruce Hawley  
President  
Circus Historical Society

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## CHS Member Spotlight

**Recognizing our members and their dedication to preserving circus history**

## CHS members help restore historic circus trailer



Circus history came alive on June 12 during the CHS Convention in Baraboo with the unveiling of the newly restored Seils-Sterling Circus ticket trailer No. 85. Seils-Sterling was a pioneer of the truck show era in the 1930s. Decades later, in the 1960s, the Lindemann Family—who owned the show—donated this amazing piece of history to Circus World.

Thanks to an incredible restoration project, CHS member Sonja Barta, who is a granddaughter of the Lindemanns, was on hand with Brian Hollifield, Chris Berry, Sharon Sellitto and other CHS members to witness the reveal. Huge thanks to veteran wagon restoration artisans Joan Stevens and Bill Bahr for their expert craftsmanship in bringing this artifact back to its former beauty. Coordinated by CHS member Julie Parkinson, this restoration project was paid for 100% by CHS members Jim Elliott, Brian and Kisha Hollifield, Bob and Millie Amon, Sharon Sellitto, and Chris Berry.

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## CHS member spoke at Magic Lantern Society convention



In April, CHS member Dick Moore gave two excellent presentations at the 2026 convention of the Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada in Toronto Canada - one historical about the British Circus and the other a fun fictional Cirque d'Magique. Magic Lantern Society presentations include not only the vintage slides, but costumes, narration, music, and audience participation.

Dick Moore invited CHS Trustee Dan Lyon and Trustee Emeritus Al Stencell to attend as guests. Al and Dan had the opportunity to converse about CHS with various members of the Magic Lantern Society. We will not be surprised if this results in new members for CHS! As with CHS conventions, the Magic Lantern Society convention included an auction of lanterns, slides, books, and other items... but Al and Dan managed to escape without buying anything.

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*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](mailto:CHSmarketingpr@gmail.com)*

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## **CHS News & Updates**



## **2026 CHS Convention a huge success!**

About 150 members and guests gathered in Baraboo Wisconsin in early June for the 2026 CHS Convention. The event featured more than thirty presentations and activities, a keynote address by award-winning aerialist Dolly Jacobs, and the induction of former Ringling clown Greg DeSanto and longtime producing clown Jerry Bangs into the International Clown Hall of Fame.

For a full list of presentations, activities, and speaker biographies, [click here](#) to see the Souvenir Program for the 2026 CHS Convention. Convention 2027 is tentatively set for early November 2027 in Sarasota, Florida.

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## **2026 Stuart Thayer Prize awarded**



At its recent convention, the Circus Historical Society awarded the 2026 Stuart Thayer Prize to Betsy Golden Kellem for her groundbreaking 2025 book, *Jumping Through Hoops: Performing Gender in the Nineteenth-Century Circus*. Named for esteemed circus historian Stuart Thayer, this prize honors outstanding research, writing, and historical scholarship on the American circus.

The 2026 prize drew intense competition. Kellem's book was one of thirteen outstanding works nominated by CHS members! [Click here](#) for the list of finalists. Congratulations to Betsy and all the other nominees whose works helped preserve the rich history of the circus!

Nominations for the 2027 Stuart Thayer Prize will open soon. For eligibility and nomination information, [click here](#).

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### 2026 Convention EXTRA video released



The Circus Historical Society was honored to host the International Clown Hall of Fame (ICHOF) 2026 induction ceremonies for Greg DeSanto and Jerry Bangs as part of our recent convention. We are also honored to welcome members of the clown community who joined the CHS since the convention! The recording of these ceremonies is now available on the CHS YouTube channel as a *CHS Convention 2026 EXTRA*. [Click here](#) to watch these heartwarming and hilarious inductions.

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## Latest news from Circus World

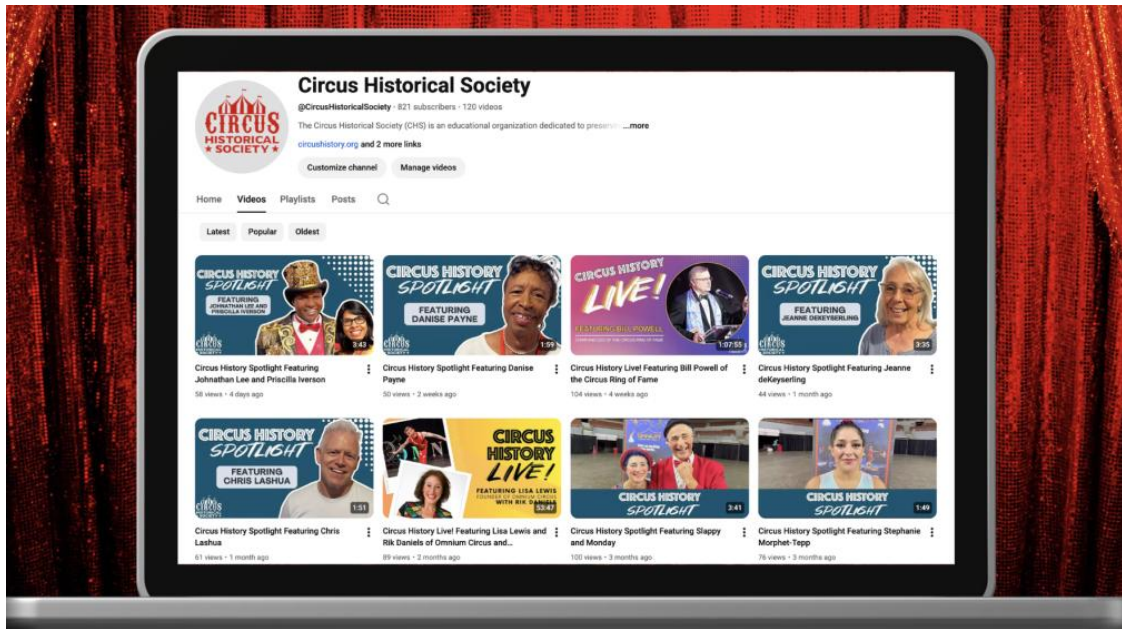
One of the highlights of the 2026 CHS Convention was a visit to Circus World in Baraboo. [Click here](#) for the latest news from Circus World.



## Coming Soon! Bandwagon Vol. 70, No. 2 (2026)

The next issue of our beautiful *Bandwagon* journal will be heading to the printer next week! It will include four well-researched articles about circus history and a special tribute to CHS Trustee Emeritus Richard Reynolds who passed away a few months ago.

CHS members can expect to receive their copy of the next *Bandwagon* during July. If you are not already a member and would like to receive *Bandwagon*, [click here](#) to join the CHS. Dues are only \$60 per year.



**CHS YouTube channel reaches 132 videos and 75,000+ views!**

Thank you for your continued support of our channel and both *Circus History Live!* and *Circus History Spotlight*. We love bringing this content to you and sharing circus history. Click the button below to visit our channel, and don't forget to subscribe!

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