

The Advance Car

The Official Newsletter of the Circus Historical Society

May 2025

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.” For the past eighty-six years, CHS members have been accomplishing that mission by authoring *Bandwagon* articles and circus history books, speaking at CHS conventions, teaching circus history classes, and working in the collections of the major circus history museums and libraries.

This issue of *The Advance Car* highlights the recent circus history activities and accomplishments of our members. Please congratulate these individuals on their outstanding efforts in helping the Circus Historical Society accomplish its mission!

We send this e-newsletter to active CHS members and to non-members who are interested in the Circus Historical Society. We send our *Bandwagon* journal of scholarly and well-researched circus history articles to only CHS members.

If you are not already a CHS member and want to start receiving our beautiful full-color *Bandwagon* journal and enjoying our other member benefits, [click here](#) and join today. See below for our special "First of May" offer. Dues are still only \$60 per year.

See you down the road!

Bruce Hawley
President
Circus Historical Society

CHS Member Spotlight

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



CHS Trustee Julie Parkinson Named Director of Circus World

Please join us in congratulating CHS Trustee **Julie Parkinson** on her new role as site director for Circus World in Baraboo, Wisconsin!

Parkinson was a performer with the Blue Unit of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey in the mid-1990s as well as Kelly Miller Circus. She previously served as the company manager for Big Apple Circus and in artistic and production capacities for five Cirque du Soleil shows. Parkinson has contributed extensive circus history articles to *Bandwagon: The Journal of the Circus Historical Society*.

She is the third generation of the Parkinson family to serve Circus World in a leadership capacity. [Click here](#) to read more.

(Photo: Circus World)



Devin Jernigan Wins Fellowship

CHS member and Yale School of Architecture PhD candidate **Devin Jernigan** was named 2025 Society of Architectural Historians Sally Kress Tompkins Fellow. Jernigan's fellowship project will document the John and Mable Ringling Ca' d'Zan Sarasota mansion. [Click here](#) for details.

(Photo: Devin Jernigan)



Amelia Osterud Featured on BBC

Authors and historians **Amelia Osterud** (CHS secretary) and **Michelle Myles** were recently interviewed by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) about tattooed lady and circus performer Maud Stevens Wagner! [Click here](#) to watch the feature and learn more about Wagner's trailblazing career.

(Photo: BBC)



(Photo courtesy of Emmett Kelly Clown Festival - Houston, MO)

2025 Emmett Kelly Clown Festival

CHS Trustee **Stasia Kelly**, daughter of legendary clown Emmett Kelly, and CHS Vice President **Chris Berry** gave a presentation to students at Houston High School during the annual Emmett Kelly Clown Festival in Houston, Missouri. [Click here](#) to read more about the Festival in the *Houston Herald*.



Betsy Golden Kellem Emmy Nomination

CHS Trustee and author **Betsy Golden Kellem** recently received an Emmy® Award nomination from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS) Boston / New England Chapter as writer and host of the Barnum Museum's series, Showman's Shorts. [Click here](#) to view these videos on the Barnum Museum YouTube channel and look for Kellem's new book, *Jumping Through Hoops: Performing Gender in the 19th Century Circus* in June 2025.

(Photo: Betsy Golden Kellem)



Donna Wolf Lamb Releases New Circus History Book

CHS member and author **Donna Wolf Lamb** released a new book in April 2025 titled *Mr. and Mrs. Clown: A Circus Love Story*. Lamb's book is based on the true-life adventures of mid-20th Century clowns Roy and Joy Thomas.

Roy and Joy toured with several US circuses, including the Al G. Kelly and Miller Bros Circus, until 1960. They were billed as "America's only Mr. and Mrs. Clown Team."

(Photo: Publisher)



In circus lingo, a "First of May" refers to a new or beginning circus employee, derived from the date on which tent shows once took to the road.

Anyone who joins the Circus Historical Society between May 1 - May 15, 2025* will receive a selection of vintage ephemera donated by CHS VP Chris Berry, including one 1960 Clyde Beatty Program, one unused piece of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey letterhead (c.1980), and a complimentary ticket to see Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey at the Long Beach Arena in 1966!

For only \$60 a year, you will receive our scholarly quarterly journal *Bandwagon* and enjoy all the other benefits of a CHS membership.

Learn More and Join CHS today!

**This promotion runs until midnight (PDT) on May 15, 2025 for online new member registrations only. Check "First of May Offer" on application. Promotion limited to first 20 new member registrations.*

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

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