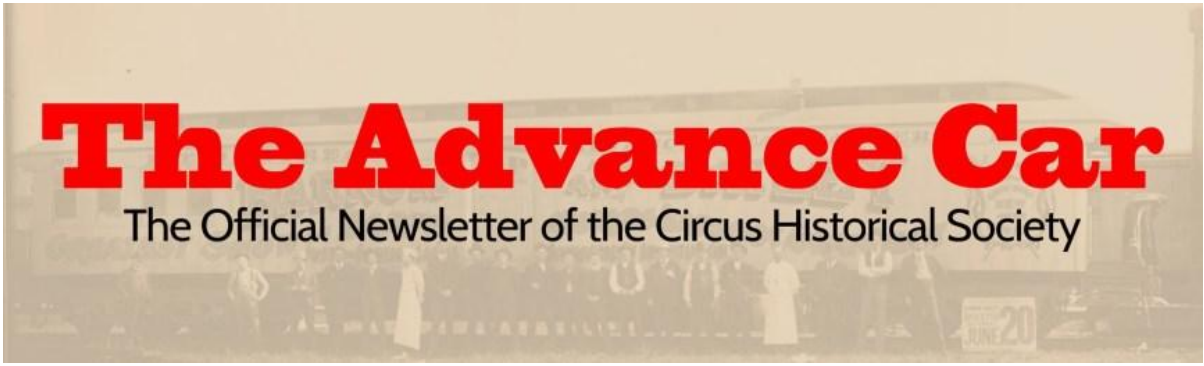


The Advance Car

The Official Newsletter of the Circus Historical Society



September 2024

Summertime was a busy time at the Circus Historical Society!

Since the last issue of *The Advance Car*, we staged a highly-successful convention, awarded the 2024 Stuart Thayer Prize to Maureen Brunsdale for her outstanding biography about legendary circus manager and trapeze artist Art Concello, published a beautiful one-hundred page fact-filled issue of *Bandwagon*, increased the number of people who follow and interact with us every day on our Facebook Page and Facebook Group, commemorated the 80th anniversary of the 1944 Hartford Circus Fire with a *Circus History Live!* interview with 86 year-old circus fire survivor Nancy Savin, and added twenty-five new members!

All these activities are the results of the efforts of our trustees and members who volunteer vast amounts of their time, talents, and treasure to help us preserve circus history. We are currently looking for members who have experience editing websites with WordPress and Divi Builder and members who want to write circus history articles for *Bandwagon*. If you would like to volunteer, email me at president@circushistory.org. If you are not already member of the CHS, [join today](#).

See you down the road!

Bruce Hawley
President
Circus Historical Society



Convention Recap

If you weren't able to attend our annual CHS convention in Atlanta in August, we missed you. If you were there, thank you for coming and contributing to another
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successful and fun gathering!

The Atlanta Marriott near Emory University provided great hospitality and comfortable places for our members to relax and cut up jackpots. The convention kicked off on Sunday afternoon August 4 with an informal gathering of our First of Mays with our board of trustees that was followed by a reception for all the attendees and ended on Wednesday evening August 7 with our huge live in-person and online annual circus memorabilia auction conducted by Freedom Auction Company. In between there was a banquet, our inaugural Big Top Brainteasers Circus History Trivia Contest, a field trip to the Rose Library at Emory University to view the Robert Brisendine Papers, and almost twenty presentations and panel discussions.

The convention opened with the *Circus in the City* panel discussion that featured Paul Binder of the Big Apple Circus and Benjamin Johnson of UniverSoul Circus. Our special friend, circus daredevil Bello Nock, was an outstanding keynote speaker. He gave us fascinating insights into his experiences as a seventh-generation circus performer. CHS Trustee and Convention Chair Stasia Kelly and her sister Monika spoke at the banquet about growing up with their famous father Emmett Kelly, Sr. After the banquet, CHS Trustee Fred Pfening III presented the 2024 Stuart Thayer Prize to Maureen Brunsdale for her outstanding biography about legendary circus manager and trapeze artist Art Concello.

Other topics included the increasing engagement with circus history and culture and histories of the Disney circuses, the sideshow geek, the circus ministries, circus education, and Coca Cola and the circus. There were also presentations about James F. O'Connell, Rosa Rosalind, Slivers Oakley, Con Colleano, Les Cirque des Reves, sharing circus history with adult learners through Osher Lifelong Learning Institute courses, the Showpeople's Winter Quarters, circus railroading, recent developments at the circus history museums and libraries, and music in the circus. There was a showing of the 1976 Canadian *High Grass Circus* film with commentary by CHS Trustee Al Stencell. CHS Trustee Brian Hollifield shared the story of the world's greatest tentmaker William Hobson and unrolled a 100+ foot architectural drawing of all of the 1930's era Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus tents. A full report of convention activities will appear in the next issue of *Bandwagon*.

If you missed this year's outstanding convention, we hope to see you next year. We will announce the dates and location of our 2025 convention shortly.

CHS Member Spotlight

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



Photo: Jeremy Brown/The Portager

Ed Limbach

CHS member Ed Limbach recently shared a viewing of a portion of his circus memorabilia collection at Independence Village in Aurora Ohio during an event titled *Ed's Dream Big Circus Showcase*. Ed has been a member of the CHS since 1965. [Read more.](#)



Photo: Courtesy of David Hudgins

David Hudgins

CHS member David Hudgins published a new book titled *The Greatest Show of Earth Comes to Corsicana*. Hudgins book includes behind-the-scenes photos and highlighted archival photos from Corsicana. [Read more.](#)

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 Selected for Prestigious Membership in the Fédération Mondiale du Cirque!

The Fédération Mondiale du Cirque in Monte-Carlo recently honored the Circus Historical Society with an Associate Membership in the Fédération because of our work in preserving the rich history of the circus! Under the honorary presidency of H.S.H. Princess Stephanie of Monaco, the Fédération is known worldwide for its efforts in the preservation and promotion of the circus arts through World Circus Day, the Global Alliance of Circus Schools, and especially through the annual International Circus Festival of Monte-Carlo.

Because of our associate membership, CHS members are now eligible to attend the Fédération's General Assembly meetings held in January each year during the International Circus Festival in Monte-Carlo. CHS members are also eligible to receive two free tickets to two of the festival's competition performances. By attending both performances, CHS members will be able to see all the acts that will be competing for awards. Travel, lodging, and meals are at your own expense.

CHS members who are interested in using these new member benefits in connection with the 2025 International Circus Festival of Monte-Carlo, should send an email to President Bruce Hawley at president@circushistory.org before September 15, 2024. If you are not already a CHS member, [join the CHS today](#).



The Showfolks of Sarasota Club recently altered its requirements to allow full membership to those who are active in the Circus Historical Society or any of the other circus enthusiast groups. [Read more](#). For additional information about the Showfolks of Sarasota Club, click [here](#).



AMERICAN CIRCUS ALLIANCE

The American Circus Alliance spotlighted the Circus Historical Society in its August e-newsletter. [Read more.](#) For additional information about the American Circus Alliance, click [here.](#)



**JOIN CHS
TODAY!**

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

Become a member at
circushistory.org

If you are not already a member, please join us today! For only \$60 a year, you will receive our scholarly quarterly journal *Bandwagon* and enjoy all the other benefits of a CHS membership. For additional information about the CHS, click [here.](#)

Member Obituaries

Paul Horsman

Paul R. Horsman, Jr. of Auburn New York passed away on July 19, 2024 at The Commons at age 95. He was born in Middleboro Massachusetts. Paul leaves behind his devoted wife of fifty-five years, Lois Smith Horsman, and several nieces and nephews. Burial was in Lakeview Cemetery in Fleming New York.

After high school, Paul was employed by the James M. Cole Circus and by the Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Paul served in the U.S. Army, 43rd Infantry Division, with one year in Germany.

Paul owned and operated the Circus Farm Museum in Fryeburg Maine opening in 1952. He later changed its name to Circus Memories. In 1978, the museum closed and Paul moved to Auburn New York where he continued building his 1/2" scale model circus and carnival. During this time, he was employed by the U.S. Postal Service as a letter carrier. Eventually, Paul became a dealer in circus and outdoor show business memorabilia. Paul will be remembered as selling his wares at many conventions as well as circuses and fairs.

A member for almost eighty years, Paul joined the Circus Historical Society in 1946. His widow Lois will continue his membership.

Brian Liddicoat

The circus community also lost another long-time member in July. Brian Liddicoat passed away on July 25, 2024. Brian was a life-long entertainment industry professional and a member of the Circus Historical Society for more than sixty years. Read his obituary [here](#).



Want more circus history? Visit the Circus Historical Society YouTube Channel and watch the recordings of our *Circus History Live!* and *Circus Spotlight* interviews! Click [here](#).

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